

WIRE

JAZZ AND

NEW MUSIC

Issue 79 september 1990 \$4.00

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ANTILLES PRESENTS



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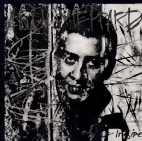


*selling water
by the side
of the river*

New explorations of the tango. Evan Lurie, a charter member of the Lounge Lizards, makes his Antilles debut with *Selling Water By The Side Of The River*. The album unveils a unique vision of tango melodies, presented by such musicians as Marc Ribot (guitar), Alfredo Pedernera (bandoneon), Jill Jaffe (violin) and John Beal (bass). Evan Lurie and his group will be appearing in concert with Wim Mertens at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall on September 19.

*selling water by the side
of the river:*

Compact Disc (ANCD 8754)
Album (AN 8754)
Cassette (ANC 8754)



*soft on
the inside*

The latest album by Britain's Jazz Instrumentalist Of The Year*. *Soft On The Inside* features his big band, the Rhythmical Personages, brought together for 12 days last winter to realise Andy Sheppard's most ambitious project to date. *Soft On The Inside* is also available as an hour-long video from Island Visual Arts.

*1989 British Jazz Awards
Andy Sheppard, together with Keith Tippett, appears at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall on September 30.

soft on the inside:

Compact Disc (ANCD 8751)
Album (AN 8751)
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Video (IVA 047)



elemental

Danny Thompson is arguably the finest acoustic bassist in the world right now. Over the past thirty years his extraordinary talents have embellished the work of a vast range of artists, from jazz to folk, rhythm and blues to pop. Thompson's own music, however, defies simple categorisation.

Working with his *creep*. Whatever, Thompson has created a wholly individual musical vocabulary, as evidenced on *Elemental*, his latest release for Antilles.

Danny Thompson and special guests will be appearing at London's Borderline from September 24 to 28.

elemental:

Compact Disc (ANCD 8753)
Album (ANC 8753)
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wire
Issue 79
september 1990
£1.85
\$4.00



Cover:
Just savings
the axe
Archive classic
by David Redfern

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wire

A member of the Namara Group

ISSN 0952-0666

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Promotion Consultants: MSP Public Relations, Namara Public Relations. Typesetting by MC Typeset Ltd, Gillingham. Printing by Garrett Dickinson Print Limited, Rotherham and London. Wire is distributed in the UK by AGB Inpress, Clarendon Court, 22-26 Farringdon Lane, London EC2A 3AA.

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EIGHT DAZE A FORTNIGHT

THE DAVIO Murray Octet begin the Arts Council's Contemporary Music Network 1990-91 season with a 14-date October tour. Tenorist Murray takes the band - James Spaulding (alto), Craig Harris (trombone), Hugh Ragin, Rasul Sidik (trumpets), Dave Burrell (piano), Wilber Morris (bass), Ralph Peterson (drums) - to London QEH (4 October); Liverpool Philharmonic Hall (5); Cheltenham Town Hall (6); Leeds Playhouse (7); Norwich St Andrew's Hall (8); Sheffield Leadmill (9); Manchester RNCM (11); Durham Dunelm House (12); Gateshead Leisure Centre (13); Birmingham Adrian Boult Hall (14); Bracknell Wilde Theatre (16); Exeter St George's Hall (17); Bath University Hall (18); Southampton Turner Sims (19). Please ring venues for details.

OUT DEMONS OUT
CANADA'S outrageous "street jazz" quintet The Shuffle Demons return to the UK this month for a series of dates that takes them to Crawley Outside In Festival (1, 2 September); Manchester Band On The Wall (6); London Canada House (10, 13); Leeds Trade Club (14). Details from 0532 742486

LIPSTICK TRACES
SAX/PIANO duo Andy Sheppard and Keith Tippett begin a UK tour this month to promote their new EG recording *66 Shades Of Lipstick*. Dates are Bristol St George's (26 September); Manchester Band On The Wall (27); Plymouth Jazz Club (28); London QEH

(30); Dartington Arts Centre (1 October); Leicester Phoenix (2, tbc); Ambleside Zeffirelli's (4); Norwich Festival (5); Brentwood Monkeys Club (7); Birmingham Midlands Arts Centre (8, tbc); Bury Arts Centre (9); Dartington Arts Centre (10); Hounslow Centrespaces (11).

THE DEAN AND I
SAXIST ELTON Dean is the latest artist to be featured in a special concert series at London's Vortex venue. Joining Dean in his five-date "Project" will be the Unlimited Saxophone Company (24 September); Keith Tippett/Marcio Mattos/Louis Moholo (25); Paul Rutherford/Paul Rogers/Nigel Morris (26); Nick Evans/Marcio Mattos/Mark Saunders (27); Howard Riley/Paul Rogers/Mark Saunders (28). Details from 071 254 6516.

RED HOUSE OVER YONDER
NEW YORK'S New Music Distribution Service, which has temporarily suspended activities because of accumulating debts, has blamed the switch to CDs as a major factor in its financial crisis. The organisation - for 18 years the world's largest distributor of independently-produced new music recordings - released a press statement claiming that "the 'CD revolution'... was catastrophic for a company whose merchandise is 85% vinyl, and resulted in massive returns of NMDS records from stores. In addition, record companies specializing in experimental music have been slow to adopt the CD format, resulting in a

shortage of saleable new releases." Other causes of their descent into the red were, say NMDS, insufficient support from funding organisations and "a dishonest distributor" who cost the company over five months' worth of income.

NMDS hopes to resume business in the near future, but in the meantime has dismissed its employees, reduced its office space and is returning its unsold vinyl stock to the labels concerned. Co-founder and president Timothy Marquand reports that ex-employees are working voluntarily to raise funds for NMDS's relaunch: "We have been an alternative for many artists who produce their own recordings, because we don't think that sales figures are an indication of their work's value. That's why it's crucial that we continue."

BLUES FOR MR CHARLIE
REEDSMAN CHARLIE Hearnshaw takes his quartet on a UK tour this autumn to promote the release of his debut LP *So Slow It* on Miles Music. Dates are Bedford Centre (21 September); Exeter Arts Centre (22); London Soho Pizza Express (27); Ipswich Peacock (28); Yeovil Quicksilver Mail (7 October); Brentwood Monkeys Club (14); Plymouth Ellingtons (19); London Vortex (26); Hull Pipers Club (31); Scarborough Stage Door (1 November); Burnley Padiham Town Hall (2). Details from 0803 291554.

CORTEZ THE KILLER (POET)
JAYNE CORTEZ, David Murray and Chick Corea head the visiting artists who'll

be appearing at the ninth Norwich Jazz Festival, which takes place from 4-9 October. Line-up includes Louisiana Red (4); Andy Sheppard & Keith Tippett (5); Roberto Plá's Latin Jazz Ensemble (6); Piano Marathon w/ John Taylor, Alex Maguire, Mervyn Africa, Sean Tracey (7, afternoon); Chick Corea Elektric Band (7, evening); David Murray Octet (8); Humphrey Lyttelton Band (9); Jayne Cortez (9). Most concerts take place at Norwich Arts Centre, except Cores and Murray at St Andrew's Hall. Details from 0603 660352.

BOW WOW WOW
BOW GAMELAN, described as "ecological sound terrorists" because of their practice of recycling industrial scrap metal as musical instruments, begin an extensive European tour this month with a 12-day residency at London's Riverside Studios (4-15 September). The group, comprising Paul Burwell, Beth Hardisty plus various guest artists, will then play further UK gigs at Northampton Arts Centre (12, 13 October); Sheffield Leadmill (15, 16); Bracknell South Hill Park (5 November); and Leicester Phoenix (14, 15) between trips to Yugoslavia and Switzerland. Details from 081 741 2132/2251.

HEY JOE!
LONDON'S FIFTH Soho Jazz Festival will run from 27 September-7 October: artists appearing include Joe Pass (at Ronnie Scott's throughout the festival); Tommy Chase Band (28 September, 100 Club); Steve Williamson (29 September, Golden Square

and 6 October, Marquee); Gerard Presencer & "A Cavalcade Of Jazz" (30 September, Palladium); Beaujolais Band (1 October, Wag Club); Courtney Pine Paradise Orchestra (7 October, Empire Leicester Square). Appearances by Archie Shepp were "under negotiation" as we went to press. Details from 071 434 3995.

FROM RUSSIA WITH LEO

SERGEY KURYOKHIN, Slava Ganelin and Anatoly Vaprirov are among the artists who will feature in a five-part TV series on Russian jazz to be shown on Channel 4 before the end of the year. The series, written and presented by Leo Feigin (whose Leo Records label has championed the cause of Russian jazz for over a decade), will also coincide with concerts of Russian avant-garde jazz to be held in Huddersfield, Liverpool and London.

Meanwhile, September jazz highlight on Radio 3 is a new five-part series on pianist Bill Evans. Titled *Along Came Bill*, the programmes will be presented by Brian Hennessy and will feature both interviews and recordings. The series, which begins on 6 September, will be broadcast on Fridays at 6.30pm.

SIR DUKE

BRITAIN'S FIRST "Duke Ellington Mass" will take place in Durham Cathedral on 6 October. The service will incorporate selections from Ellington's three Concerts Of Sacred Music and feature the Stan Tracey Orchestra with vocalist Tina May, jazz dancer Will Gaines and the Durham



Keys to the highway. Pianist MERVYN AFRICA takes his quartet on tour next month. Photo by NICK WHITE.

Cathedral Choir. Earlier in the day, the Orchestra will also perform Tracey's *Genesis* suite in the Cathedral.

HELLO, AFRICA

PIANIST MERVYN Africa takes his quartet — Dave DeFries (trumpet), Michael Mondesir (bass), Nana Tsiboe (percussion) — on an extensive Jazz Services' *New Time* tour in October. Dates are Nottingham Bobby Brown's (10 October); Manchester Band On The Wall (11); Westminster Old Bell Hotel (12); Exeter Arts Centre (13); Coventry Warwick University Arts Centre (14); Newcastle Corner House (16); York Arts Centre (17); Southport Arts Centre (18); Burnley Mechanics (19); Bristol Albany (20); Brentwood

Hermit House (21); London venue tbc (23); Aberystwyth Arts Centre (24); Shrewsbury Buttermarket (25); Brighton Jazz Club (26); Bradford Red Notes (27); Birmingham Midlands Arts Centre (28). Details from 071 829 8354.

MAPLE LEAF RAGOUT

MARILYN CRISPELL, Oliver Lake, Henry Threadgill and John Zorn are among the artists appearing at this year's Festival International De Musique Actuelle at Victoriaville, Canada. The festival runs from 4-8 October and concerts include Paul Bley & Yannick Rieu (4); John Zorn's *Slan* (5); Henry Threadgill's *Very, Very Circus*, Leroy Jenkins & Oliver Lake (6); Marilyn Crispell Qnt

w/Oliver Lake and Reggie Workman, George Lewis & Don Ritter, Arditti String Qt, Henry Kaiser & Jin Hi Kim, Curlew, Trevor Watts's *Moire Musac Drum Orchestra* (7); The Recedents, Henry Kaiser, Steven Micus (8). Details from Canada 819 752 7912.

VARÈSE A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW

THE SOUTH Bank's *Brave New Worlds* series and the SNO's *Musica Nova* festival provide this month's contemporary composition highlights. *Brave New Worlds* includes RFIH concerts of Stockhausen's epic *Hymnen* (7 September); Messiaen/Boulez/Varèse's *Amérique* (9); Beethoven/Varèse's *Divers* (16); conductors are Stockhausen, Boulez and Simon Rattle respectively. Details from 071 928 3002. Glasgow's *Musica Nova* festival, from 15-19 September, highlights four featured composers — John Cage, James MacMillan, Nigel Osborne and Wolfgang Rihm. World premieres at the festival will include Cage's *Scottish Circus* (20); MacMillan's *Piano Concerto* (22); Osborne's *Violin Concerto* (21); and a new piece by Rihm (22). Details from 041 332 7244.

A CORRECTION IS GONNA COME

THE MICHAEL Brecker Band's Town & Country Club concert announced in *Wire* 78 has been changed from 24 October to 14 November; and the Very Big Carla Bley Band will now play London's Hackney Empire on 17 October (not 19, as previously listed), before visiting Aberdeen's Alternative Festival on 18.



* shows that other concerts at this venue are listed in the news section, pp 4-5. Please note that the deadline for October listings is 1 September.

Bradford Festival

(0274 309199/394396)

Roberto Pla's Latin Ensemble
Steve Williamson
Morrissey/Mullen Band

Jazz Pose

Conjunto Fuego

Paul Buckton/George

Haslam/Paul Heston/

Paul Rutherford

Grupo Son Tropical

La Clave

Brighton Concerts

(0273 606460)

Bobby Shew

Bristol Albert Inn

(0272 661968)

Keith & Marcia

Pendlebury Band w/Art

Themen

Gypsy Jazz

Harry Beckett Qc

Tom Richards Trio

Hard Lines

Ron King Qc w/Keith

Tippest

Burnley Mechanics (0282 30605)

Louisiana Red

Cambridge Pleshards

(0454 622 6223 62350)

Mam Ventura

w/Monster Brothers

Cardiff Four Bars Inn

(0222 374962)

Dick Hauer Qc

Steve Noble/Alex

Maquie, The Diggers

Frevo

Eric Herbert Trio

Conner Pocket

Heavy Qc

Hard Lines

Welsh Jazz Orchestra

Lee Goodall Qc

Cheltenham Queen's Hotel

(0242 523690)

Kenny Drew Trio

Crawley Heath Centre

(0293 333636)

Outside In Festival w/

29th Street Sax Qc, Don

Pullen, Andy Sheppard

Big Band, Clusone Trio,

Caspar Brotzman,

AMM, God, Stock,

Haenen & Walkman,

21 Haenen & Walkman,

22 Slav To The Rhythm,

Balanescu String Qc

w/Evan Parker & more

7 Don Cherry & Mulin

Kult, John Zorn's Stan,

Steve Williamson, Paul

Rutherford's Iskrastra,

Shuffle Demons, Larry

2 Scabbins's QRZ, Thai,

5 Billy Jenkins & more

9 Falmouth Vester Drags

16 (0736 755093)

23 Ralph Freeman Qc

w/John Williams

30 **Halifax Bennett's**

(0422 345611)

29 Five Easy Pieces

3, 10, 17, 24

Kings Langley Rose & Crown

(09277 62462)

Tina May Qc

28 John McCullum Band

Leeds Adelphi (c/o Tenants Club

0532 742066)

1 Paul Rutherford/George

Haslam

4 Charlie Collins/John

8 Jinnach

18 **Liverpool** venue etc

20 (01865 69349)

21 John Burgess Trio

22 **Manchester Band On The Wall**

(061 832 6625)*

29 Jazz NW Showcase

Mold Theatre Chyd (01352 53114)

Welsh Jazz Octet w/Sean

21 Tracey

Nottingham The Vicua

(01865 69349)

John Burgess Trio

Oxford Old Fire Station

(01865 69349)

John Burgess Trio

Penzance Arena

(01736 755093)

Ralph Freeman Qc

w/John Williams

Sevenoaks Frog & Bucket

1 (073275 219)

Hard Lines

Sheffield Lardmill

(0742 754500)

Vout Oronio night -

band etc

St Ives venue etc

(01736 755093)

Ralph Freeman Qc

w/John Williams

Tunbridge Wells Trinity Arts

16 Centre (0892 44699)

Miler Carr Qc w/Dick

Morrissey, Jim Mullen

Windsor Festival (0753 758336)

Don Weller w/BYJO

Omega Ensemble

13 Jazz Formula

20 Alan Sudmore/John

Baigra Qc

Dave Holdsworth/Liane

Carroll Qc

21 Second Eleven

Gypsy Jazz

28 Lol Coxhill & The

Improvers

Worthing Pavilion

(0903 820500)

Peet King w/NJYO

Yeovil Quackshot Mail

(0309 053 28917)

Chris Biscoe Qc

Clark Tracey Qc

LONDON

Bass Clef NI (071 729 2476)

Fayaz Virgi Septet

Duke Jordan Trio

11-13 Harry Beckett/John

Burgess Qc

15-20 **Vortex N16** (071 234 6316)*

Jan Shaw Qc

26 John Stevens Qc

Sue Sharrock/Terry

Disley Qc

12 Pete King Qc

7 Pete King Qc

100 Club W1 (071 616 0933)

Tommy Smith

Marilyn Crispell Trio

26 Unit 5

Esmond Selwyn Qc

Henry's Pencil

21 Evidence

28 John Burgess Trio

Dave DeFries Qc

21 John Etheridge Qc

Waterloo Park N6

(071 860 3866/69)

1 Tommy Chase Qc, Carol

Grimes Band

Watermans Arts Centre

Stratford (081 847 3651)

Calcutta Drum Orchestra

(late night) Cleveland

Watkins

18 **Willenden Green Library**

Centre NW10 (081 431 4875)

Nebula & Forcione

12 David Cross

14 Jann Martin

22 Kimbarn Brothers

26

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MORE RHYTHM, LESS NOIS

PAUL RUTHERFORD will be leaving us at Outside In, Bradford, Leeds and London this month. Photo by CAROLINE FORBES.



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Christof Lauer: *Choristof Lauer*

Towering new tenor with Kahn and Erikson – "absolutely superb" (Wire 73).

Glen Velez: *Atteryan Rose*

Percussive postmodern powers on – "compelling" (Wire 75).

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★

romancing the bone

Man of brass Ray Anderson unbuttons

his lip on bebop and the blues. Kenny

Mathieson gets connected to a hip 'bone.

Photo by Andy Rumball.

LISTENING TO Ray Anderson run through his apparently infinite repertoire of effects on the trombone, the temptation is to question the probity of those generations of players who have told us, over and over, what a bitch of an instrument it is to play. Anderson, though, will have none of that; he may have curbed its more brutal rebellions, but he is in no doubt of the difficulties – or the satisfaction – of the struggle.

"If you haven't been in training, man, forget it. This instrument is rough, it's real mean like that. There's no question about it, the damn thing is hard to play, but it has its own unique set of rewards as well. There are things which you can do on a trombone which you can't do on anything else, although it is very difficult to put that into words. It's those trombone things which stem from the fact that no other instrument makes its sounds from lip and slide in that way, and there are things you can do with both of these things which are unique to the horn.

"Trombone is one of the very few western instruments not tied to western scales, for example, and the possibilities for bending the pitches are increased. If you master the techniques, which I haven't, you could easily play Indian forms like ragas on it. There is only one moving part on the trombone, and there is something about the simplicity of that which I like – you have this brass tube, and you can make it longer and shorter, and that's it. I kinda like that. Control is mostly down to lip, not more so than a trumpet player, just different. You can only articulate seven semitones with the slide, then you have to change your lip to get anything more."

Recently, though, Anderson found himself in trouble with his trombonist colleagues Steve Turre and Robin Eubanks over some apparently dismissive remarks on bebop trombonists he had made in a *down beat* interview. Their response, which genuinely upset and angered Anderson, was based, he insists, on a misunderstanding.

"What I was trying to say is that anyone who plays bebop

must be really a monster player on the instrument, because it is so damned difficult, but they took it as a put-down of the bebop players. That's the last thing I would want to do – those cats were unbelievable, man, those were the heroes. That stuff is not easy to play on the trombone.

"It's not easy to play on any instrument, but there is a lot of difference between doing this," he says, imitating saxophone fingering in front of his chest, "and doing this," laughing raucously as he pumps an imaginary slide to its outer limit at maximum speed. "Let's face it, there is some difference here. You got half-an-inch of motion against three feet! No, man, I wasn't looking to put anybody down. I wrote to the magazine (his letter subsequently appeared in the March issue) to put the record straight."

RAY ANDERSON took up trombone at eight, influenced by his father's Dixieland records ("I liked that growl!") and the fact that his older brother already played clarinet ("We had a friend who played trumpet, and we used to put together these little Dixieland arrangements and play them when we were kids").

He "pretty much decided" to be a professional musician when he was about 17. Brief spells at three different colleges followed, adding up to around a year in all. "I'm not really college-educated, and absolutely not as far as music is concerned. I didn't go to a heavy music school at all, although I did some good ear-training at my first college, and a great African drum course in Los Angeles, but nothing in the way of theory."

At that time, Anderson found few opportunities to play jazz. Most of his work was carried out earning a living in the horn sections of funk and rhythm-and-blues bands, firstly in Minneapolis St. Paul, where he spent about a year, then in California. He was in Los Angeles for five or six months, then San Francisco for almost two years.



In 1973, the Chicago-born trombonist made the move to New York, where he has been based ever since, and found a new way to pay the rent. "In New York it was possible to make a living playing Latin music, so I started doing a lot of that, and simultaneously playing jazz in the loft scene, which was going very strongly when I arrived there. That was a good time, and it meant that I got to play a lot of music in a lot of different contexts."

If there has been any dominant feature in Anderson's musical career to date, then playing a lot of music in a lot of different contexts is probably it. The trombonist's first major international jazz exposure came with the iconoclastic Anthony Braxton, when he was recommended to the saxophonist by Barry Altschul, and by his former school-mate in Chicago, trombonist George Lewis, whose chair he took in the quartet. It was a suitably unspecific beginning for a player who values diversity over formal pigeon-holding.

"It's really all just music to me, because I don't even classify myself as a jazz player, although I guess maybe other people do that. The first thing I do with the horn is try to be aware of, and to tell the truth about, my emotional state at the time. That's the story that's getting told, it's down to what you feel and how you feel. So the improviser has to have that basis in some feeling, and that is what works for me, because people can share that, whatever it is — fear, love, anger, joy, grief, anxiety, whatever. If you tie into one of these, then that is something which really communicates musically."

"There are certain qualities in the music itself which you have to take into account — you know, a ballad is a ballad, and an up-piece is an up-piece. But it's also true that any of the tunes which I write can be played in radically different ways every night, and they are that way on purpose, because that is what I want."

"It's almost a kind of Zen practice, it's like 'be here now, be here now, be right here and do what's happening', just go for that focus. If you are distracted by something happening with the sound system or what you are for dinner or whatever, you have to get that out of your mind and just be there with the music, and if you do that, the music you are creating tells you what to do."

That ambition to keep things fluid extends to the role played by his ensemble as well. Anderson chooses his musicians — the current band features Japanese pianist Fumio Itibashi, long-time collaborator Mark Dresser on bass, and drummer Pheeroan akLaff — for their ability to adjust to the changing demands of the music as much as for their intrinsic abilities, players who are able to "hear the way things might be going, and pick up on the direction right then and go with it."

ANDERSON'S GROWING recorded output as a leader reflects that disinterest in being typecast. His versatile, astonishingly flexible trombone is bent to fit an array of musical styles (or maybe it's the other way around?), from the all-inclusive, transforming new music experimentation of *Harrisburg Half Life* (Moers Music), *Right Down Your Alley*

(Soul Note), the ebullient *It Just So Happens* (Enja) or the trio sets with Mark Helias and Gerry Hemingway, *You Be* (Minor Music) and *Wooferlo* (Soul Note), to the more solidly in-the-tradition set *Old Bottles, New Wine* (Enja), a collection of jazz standards, albeit given the full Anderson treatment.

Even a cursory listen to "Owl" or "Laird Baird" from the latter would give the lie to any accusation of Anderson's unwillingness to tangle with the problems of bebop harmony and tempos, while *Blues Bred In The Bone* (Enja) harks back to his earliest professional playing days, transformed by the player's rumbustious spirit of adventure and willingness to put himself on the line with a notoriously intractable horn.

In each of these contexts, and in the forthcoming Gramavision set *What Beasts*, Anderson reinforces his claim to be regarded as the most innovative, questing contemporary trombonist, in a generation which boasts more than a few exemplary performers on the horn. His determination to concentrate on his own group led him to turn down a European trip with George Russell this summer ("George's music is always interesting to play, but he doesn't like trombones too much"), although he will be fulfilling a recording commitment with Charlie Haden's Liberation Orchestra.

An increasingly busy schedule for several of the members has also led to the demise (permanent or otherwise) of radical funk-jazzers Slickaphonics. The collective nature of decision-making in the band was eating up too much time for a man intent on pushing on with his own music, both as player and composer.

"Well, the damned thing just grew. There was no planning — we definitely never took a decision what to do with Slickaphonics. People would bring in material which got worked on and turned into repertoire, but there was never any decision about what kind of band it was."

In a natural enough progression, Anderson now feels that composition is an increasingly important part of his work, "especially in terms of trying to figure out that whole business of how you translate a feeling into notes. That is completely fascinating to me, that question of how you take rhythm and melody and harmony and tie that together so that it winds up actually recreating that feeling which you began with."

He is less likely to focus with such intensity on his bizarre singing voice, a real oddity, patched somewhere in a no-man's land between Louis Armstrong and Tom Waits. He speaks that way, too, albeit without the freakish split-tone harmonizing evident in his occasional forays into song, like "Wine" (on *Old Bottles, New Wine*) or the Ellington classic "I'm Just A Lucky So-And-So" on *What Beasts*. I confidently assumed that some kind of electronic processing must have been used...

"No, man," he guffaws (Ray, you will have gathered by now, likes to laugh a lot), "I just did it — there are no vocal overdubs. I have this funny voice, and I can just split the tones like that, so I just did it." He grins slyly. "Without recourse to electronic systems."



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Pat Metheny And Friends

LONDON
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

HOWEVER MANY times you reinterpret the phrase "in the tradition", the guitar spills out of it: venerate Wes, Jimi, Charlie Christian, Blood, Hiram, Frish, Bailey, Arto, Ribot, Lou – or Slash of Guns 'N' Roses – it's always a noise, a black/white noise. It messes up everyone's neat borders. That's what it's for.

Nor tonight. Our four companions – Pat Metheny, Dave Holland, Jack DeJohnette and Herbie Hancock, arena-jazz aristos all – nudge each other back onto the pedestrian walkway that's paved over this once-vibrant city centre. Duty to tourists first.

Holland, on upright or electric, is an inventively stolid melody man, more geometer-anchored than funkateer. DeJohnette, as it happens, needs lighter and flightier (younger?) lines to decenter his crisp sawsaw bashing. Unexpectedly, they shoot each other down.

Hancock, deftly retiring in any real rhythm context, is a natural funkateer. When someone else provides the funk, his archetypal slippery colourisation doubles all the values. Tonight, not helped by bass, drum or one-tone miking, the Man Who Never Plays Solo expands to fill the space to lead, with thickened precision chording, two-handed cluster-comping and needlepoint runs, as if he'd been suborned by Cecil for the evening. Not his usual self, and actually something of a revelation – but not to his companions' advantage.

Metheny's only real moments come when he's lobbing illogical tone-bombs into Herbie's solos. Solong after him, inspired by the pianist's exactitudes to steer away from his own noise resources, Pat basically unveils glib arpeggios. Hardly at his best dead-centre of fret or beat, this is nonetheless where he mostly plays, except when he forgets himself and his companions and veers off weirdwards. He needs his Latin pals, very badly – plus ideas from Frisell. Or Vernon Reid. Or VooD.

The solid-body electric guitar: anyone can play it, everyone does. And what we love about that is that it keeps all the significant problems unresolved. It reminds you – faster than any other instrument – that expressive value is never predetermined, that less talent may lead to greater achievement. Knowing me well, my editors told me I'd find this show "too jazzy" ... but I kind of hope this isn't what they meant: Herbie's new iron boldness aside, this was high-class group-improv as safety in numbers. Bigwig 80s Trad. Huh?

MARK SINKER

Alex Maguire/ Michael Moore/ Sven-Ake Johansson

LONDON
RED ROSE CLUB

ON THE tube on my way to this gig I was reading the fourth part of Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker's Guide* trilogy: a minor coincidence, since Johansson is a drummer who knows where his towel is. Usually it's draped over the snare or the tom-tom, sometimes it's rolled up and used to flick at the bass drum or the cymbals.

I was set to pondering the importance of coincidence in music of this kind. Such musicians, players who listen to each other, really *listen*, who share a tradition and a vocabulary, who let instinct and intuition guide them, are going to produce passages which sound pre-arranged no matter how spontaneous they are. But there will usually be just perceptible delays between one musician setting off a new process and the others picking up on it and reinforcing it. I was impressed with the frequency with which these three seemed to achieve simultaneity as the performance moved into a new gear or mood.

Johansson has well-established credentials in free music, not least his involvement in Peter Breitzmann's debut albums *For Adolphe Sax* and *Machin Gun*. He last appeared in London 20 years ago, and I suspect that those who saw him then never forgot it. His playing is full of gestures that are as much drama as music. Some are visual – the cupping of cymbals behind his ears, the dapper, coiled-spring energy which informs his movements behind the kit, roving the stage, playing unconventional accordion or declaiming poetry – others are both aural and visual – the pouring of chickpeas onto the head of a tom-tom, the peas' unpredictable flight as the sticks struck the skin, the swishing of cymbals used in a semaphoric ritual, the occasional replacement of conventional cymbals with ones made of plywood or foam rubber.

Maguire, ensconced at the brontosaurus upright, played assertively, counterbalancing Johansson's mixture of percussion scaffolding and subversive theatrics. Moore would often tread his own, introspective path between them, threading a calm lyric line on clarinet, bass clarinet or alto, but was

quite capable of positive intervention. His alto could be especially strident, but never inappropriately obtrusive. I hope we get the chance to hear him again soon.

BARRY WITHERDEN

Gerald Wilson Big Band

LONDON
BASS CLEF

BIG BANDS can seriously alter your clientele, so the Bass Clef was full of guys in their 30s, name-dropping 19 to the dozen. Of course, the reason they left their record collections and came out for two nights was that the 71-year-old Gerald Wilson had never been to Europe before. He'd hardly even left the West Coast for several decades until an invitation from the North Sea Festival put this tour in motion. Neither had Oscar Brashear, since working with Basie 20 years ago, or trombonist Thurman Green. And those of us who suspected that drummer Mel Lee was a misprint for Mel Lewis were face to face with the actual Mel Lee, alive and kicking the band along, albeit in somewhat Lewis-like fashion.

None of the star names of Wilson's 60s bands, such as Harold Land or Teddy Edwards, made the trip, but this 17-piece outfit sounded remarkably similar to its earlier manifestations. Many of the old scores were settled in with the current personnel, such as "Milestones", considerably expanded by the use of greater solo space. Even the new items in the book, such as "Jenna", were rendered in the same style because they rely less on solo quality than on Wilson's distinctive ensemble writing and harmonic piquancy. Along with a general sensitivity to

Good vibrations from the original *West Coast* WILSON. Photo by ANDREW POTHECARY



dynamics it was the density of Gerald's typical harmonies, as opposed to more traditional voicings, which prevented the band from being too loud in this confined space. And there was no cheating: the brief use of two flutes on "Blues For Nya Nya" (correct spelling, according to the composer) was audible without over-close miking.

Wilson's running commentary, often while the rhythm section romped away waiting for the next cue, turned this into a mini-history of music. Establishing, for instance, the date of his first scores for Ellington; identifying "You Better Believe It" as originally commissioned by Basie; discussing the virtues of the Jimmie Lunceford band; describing the role of flatted ninths in the Wilson approach to writing. The latter point should have been traced back to Duke (and Strayhorn) but the fact remains that Gerald's associations have made him a unique if conservative presence on the big-band scene.

BRIAN PRIESTLEY

Ensemble Accroche Note

LONDON
ALMEIDA FESTIVAL

ENSEMBLE ACCROCHE Note consist of three ferociously gifted French musicians. But this is classical music, and the score is crucial: their first concert, featuring works by young French composers, gave them no chance to shine. "The Show Must Go On" by Jean-Pierre Drouot (a composer who also plays percussion in "jazz, music-hall and oriental music") attempted to communicate by having the musicians do all the things they are not trained to do, such as stamping their feet and playing role-games. The sound of the academy unbending is all creaks and blishes:

swful.

However, faced with truly testing scores these same musicians became vital. The English composers they chose for their second concert — avant-gardists who have been labelled "The New Complexity" — began, appropriately, with Brian Ferneyhough. Exiled because of the musical establishment's contentment with undemanding mediocrity, he is a last-generation example of intransigence for the New Complexity hotbloods (compare Derek Bailey for improvisers or Jeremy Prynne for poets).

"Time And Motion Study I" for bass clarinet might offend listeners for whom Vaughan Williams is the apex of national achievement, but for ears trained on Dolphy, Braxton and Brötzmann it is a transparently logical testing of the extremes of this extreme instrument. Armand Angster was superb.

This was followed by Chris Dench's "Funk". Written as a tribute to Coltrane's *Azmon* (source, according to Dench, for Miles' "orchestrally-conceived funk albums" of the 70s — whatever this man is on, I want some!) it appears with a quote from Wittgenstein on the meaning of "funk". A similarly reckless dialectic of incongruity propels the music, a dialogue between contrabass clarinet and percussion.

According to Paul Griffiths of *The Times*, the performance was "plainly inaccurate" and therefore not complex at all, but "lustrily primitive". (Where does the complexity of traditional African rhythms fit here?) Dench has indeed caught the soundworld of Elvin's drums — horizontal cymbal sheen punctuated by vertical toms — but the structure of the piece, building to a whistle and whiplash, is unlike anything in improvised music. The piece minutely analyses the sonic turbulence Stock-

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hausen now distains: intense and thought-provoking.

James Dillon's surrealist collage of song technique "Evening Rain" was elegantly performed by Françoise Kubler, though maybe it deserves a bigger voice. Jean-Michel Collet's rendition of Michael Finnissy's "Hinomai" was striking. Though it lacks the three dimensions of Dench's writing for percussion, it had some of the implacable force of Xenakis.

Dench, Finnissy and Dillon are writing music of relevance to anyone interested in radical sound. This is achieved by taking the possibilities of the score-performer relationship to the limit. Logical, because despite the widespread use of classical music as a palliative after a hard day at the office, this relationship is in fact its defining characteristic.

BEN WATSON

The Yellowjackets

LONDON
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

THE LAST time The Yellowjackets played in London as a unit, it was backing Randy Crawford. This time, opening a Capital Jazz show for Lee Ritenour, their reputation as the respectable face of "fusion" had been secured. The band belie fuses reputation for easy hooks and melodic banality. They delivered a rough performance that was demanding without being intimidating and difficult without ever becoming opaque. The Grammy-winning quartet have now set themselves firmly against the conventions of the

four-on-the-floor instrumental funk that anchored their early experiments. Nowadays, new age vapidity has sometimes threatened to engulf their creativity in a wash of ambient sound. Though this show occasionally skirted around the bombastic pretensions associated with late-period Weather Report, there was plenty of real wit, drama and an intelligent determination to avoid the easy way out of some labyrinthine improvisation.

The set, drawn from their last four albums, was dominated by pianist Russell Ferrante's angular compositions. The band sounded more convincing while reinterpreting swinging material like "Whistle While You Walk" from their last set, *The Spin*. Ferrante's "A Prayer for El Salvador" offered a memorable counterpoint to this upbeat mood and the evening ended with a rousing version of "Revelation", a gospel tune which is becoming something of a modern R&B standard. Since his switch to the fretless instrument, Jimmy Haslip's bass playing has developed into something really special. He has created a delightfully eccentric voice in a musical language still haunted by the memory of Jaco Pastorius. Haslip's growth as a player is also connected to the rhythmic sense of William Kennedy, who replaced the original drummer Ricky Lawson. His freer approach offsets Haslip's textures, and their combination produces a dynamic equilibrium which constitutes the core of the band's elaborate arrangements. Alcourse Marc Russo seems lately to have learned the discipline necessary to match his impressive technique. The intensity of their interaction conveyed the impression that we were listening to a band very much at the peak of its powers.


PAUL GILROY

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ON SALE NOW

In the 60s he played with Ornette, Albert and Trane. In the 70s he lived in a Swedish

trumpet to timbuktu

forest. In the 80s came Long Island, Codona and Rip Rig & Pass. Don Cherry is the musical nomad for whom all the world's a stage. Steve Lake compiles a guide to the hush-hush bowerman. Photo by Nick Whiss.

"When I play I think of how the phrases move as a dance, or something in nature like a bird or a shooting star." — Don Cherry

WRITER FRANCIS Davis once called him "a musical Marco Polo". I think of Don Cherry more as a Red Indian scout with one ear to the ground.

An anecdote heard recently brought this home. In Munich in the late 1960s, during soundtrack recordings for George Moore's film *Pan*, Cherry took a walk through the busy Schwabing district with scriptwriter (and painter/poet/gallerist) Klaus Lea. Cars, buses, trams were rattling past and the streets were full of the noisy bustle of crowds. Cherry stopped suddenly in his tracks.

"What's that?" he said.

He could hear a rhythm, he could *feel* it in his feet. Lea confessed he could distinguish nothing above the big city's aleatoric racket. Cherry was adamant. A rhythm. Drummers? There was some special kind of groove going on in the neighbourhood. Holding a forefinger aloft, Don led the way through the streets for some 300 metres. They crossed the road and stood in front of a bakery. We're getting there, Cherry said. They descended some basement stairs, opened a door and confronted . . . a conveyor belt on which bread rolls were being stamped out of dough — *chunk-a-chunk-a-chunk*. Don

listened with great satisfaction.

"That's it."

And then they continued on their way.

Perfect. If there is music — or something like it — in the vicinity, Don Cherry's going to find it. And most likely play with it, dance to it.

In the absence of music, he'll settle for a good silence. The loaded silence you might find deep in a Swedish forest, in the Tunisian desert, in Tuscany's prehistoric caves, or under the arch in New York's Washington Square Park in the middle of the night. The kind of silence that begs to be embellished with a whisper of bamboo flutes, or the fibrous buzzing of the *doussn'gouni*, the African hunter's harp, or the asthmatic whinnying of a battered Pakistani pocket trumpet.

OFFICIALLY SINCE 1964, when he made his first visit to Morocco and, effectively, all his life, Don Cherry's been on an acoustic expedition, sounding out the globe, a wire-thin Black Oklahoma Choctaw nomad on the trail of our common musical heritage.

"Cherry's the world's musical memory," his friend Karl Berger says. Decades before "world music" was any kind of buzzword, Cherry was seeking out correspondences between the traditions, puzzling over the qualities that seemed to link



Bulgarian and African singing, jamming with *gists*, presenting himself to assorted Indian masters as a student, learning to approximate the subtle nuances of the *alap*, a *raga's* slow first movement, in his thoughtful, intensely melodic trumpet improvisations.

His childlike optimism carries him (usually) beyond the contradictions that differing notions of technique and form imply. It isn't and never will be "one world", but Cherry at his best can make you forget that for a while. But whatever the context, whether playing with Lou Reed, Latif Khan, Krzysztof Penderecki, Nana Vasconcelos or Ed Blackwell, Cherry is still the same man that Steve Lacy remembers as the first free player in New York.

"In '60, he was completely free already, and I don't know anyone else who was," Lacy told Martin Davidson. "He'd say 'Let's play.' I'd say 'What tune?' and he'd say 'Come on, let's just play.'"

DON CHERRY was born in Oklahoma City in 1936. His dad worked in The Cherry Blossom Jazz Club there and saw enough of jazz's dark side to want to steer his son clear of a career in the music: "he believed playing jazz was the first step to drug addiction" (not an unfounded fear). The family moved to the Watts district of Los Angeles. In California, Don fell under the spell of Johnny Otis's radio show and became hooked on the blues and R&B, learned to dance, eased his way towards jazz, met Billy Higgins in detention school and formed his first band. Studied trumpet in college, played shuffle piano with Arthur Wright's rhythm and blues band (Higgins on drums). He was by all accounts on his way to becoming a useful hard bop trumpeter, encouraged by Clifford Brown (you can still hear echoes of Clifford in Cherry's "straighter" music; refer to *Art Deco*) when, in 1956, he hooked up with a long-haired Texan altoist who had other ideas entirely. But you know that part of the story, and we have the albums to testify to how wonderful it was and is.

From *Something Else!* and the records with the Paul Bley Quintet through to *Ornette On Tenor*, the music is so clear — a group music in a way that bop seldom was — and so songlike, so unambiguously beautiful that the controversy it engendered is surely impossible to comprehend at this late date. I don't think there's a prettier piece than the free blues "Peace" (*The Shape Of Jazz To Come*) in the music's history, and Cherry's solo accounts for half of its haunted beauty. Yet there are still nay-sayers among us. Miles, in his *Autobiography*, sounds like the proverbial critic-at-the-bar: "I didn't like what they were playing, especially Don Cherry on that little horn. It just looked to me like he was playing a lot of notes and looking real serious . . . people will go for anything they don't understand if it's got enough hype."

Anyway, the Coleman Atlantics are almost universally acknowledged as the blueprints from which free jazz was developed and few experimentally-minded trumpeters have been untouched by Cherry's contribution to them. There's a good deal of early Cherry in the horns of Bowie, Dara, Stanko,

Kondo, John Corbett, almost any modern trumpeter you care to name . . . even the determinedly unfree Marsalis has learned from him.

The Coleman group's achievements would have secured Cherry's reputation forever but, born to ramble, he had to move on. More than any other horn player of his generation, Cherry was able to scramble amongst the range of idioms that free jazz represented in the early 60s. From Ornette to Rollins to Ayler to George Russell — that's a lot of territory. The jury is still out on *The Avant Garde*, his collaboration with Coltrane (recorded five months before Ornette's *Free Jazz*). Its slightly tenuous feel hinges on the fact that Coltrane wasn't yet as liberated from the constraints of chord changes as the trumpeter. Cherry, nonetheless, took much from the encounter. Coltrane's notion of jazz as a *devotional* music took seed, so did the saxophonist's growing interest in non-western musics.

Cherry's pocket trumpet sparkled and sputtered around Rollins's quick-witted tenor during their brief association. At the time, Leroy Jones considered the Rollins/Cherry group the hottest band on the planet. Rollinsologists usually point to *Our Man In Jazz* as the epitome of Sonny's flirtation with the *avant garde*, but *Stuttgart 1963* (Jazz Anthology Records) gives a better index of the unrealized potential of this bracing combination, if only because bassist Henry Grimes is demonstrably further into this new music than was the dependable, faithful and sometimes rather prosaic Bob Cranshaw. And after that — Albert.

Cherry's described Ayler as "a total folk musician", and it's possible to view *Vibrations* as a jump-off point into the uncodified world of global folklore where, sometimes, it's *about sounds not notes* (depends which culture we're discussing, of course). . . . But in the mid-60s there were still places where jazz could be taken — we weren't yet driving backwards — and the New York Contemporary Five (Cherry, Shepp and Tchicai up front) located a few of them. So did Cherry's Blue Note leader dates. Based mostly in Paris from '64 to '69, Cherry took his tenor player, the Argentinian Gato Barbieri to the States for *Complete Communion* and opened a few ears. It sounded then as if Gato would become an important post-Ayler, post-Sanders voice. Instead he was effectively strangled by his "roots". Nonetheless, the Cherry/Barbieri teaming was tumultuously unique and Mike Mantler wrote "Communications # 8" to orchestrate its fiery beauty (*Jazz Composer's Orchestra*). (Later, Cherry would take over that orchestra for his *Relativity Suite*.)

Fulfilling his role as outrider for the *avant garde*, Cherry was among the first Americans to see the potential of the European end of the music. His 1968 *Eternal Rhythm* featured Albert Mangelsdorff, Bernt Rosengren, and Arild Andersen alongside Sonny Sharrock, on compositions built around Balinese scales. In 1971 — after curtailing a return to the States in disgust at US foreign policy in Vietnam and Cambodia — he joined the Peter Brötzmann group and also toured and recorded in a duo with Han Bennink (*Orient*). The obsessive travels continued — Timbuktu, the Sahara, India, Japan.

In the 70s his base was an old schoolhouse in the Swedish forest where, with artist wife Moki and family, he tried hard to live the simple life, growing his own food, becoming a vegetarian, integrating playing and singing into the daily round, and, when concerts were unavoidable (Cherry heartily dislikes the European tradition of the artist on a podium) inviting amateurs and children to be part of this *Organic Music*. Big city jazz critics were (understandably) impatient with this development. If you picked the wrong gig, Don might just blow a conch or rattle bones and chant. But for Cherry the period had a healing function. Living close to the land, he could resolve recurrent drug problems and find the peace of mind to meditate. Eventually, he found out that he needed both environments – the metropolis and the country – and until recently commuted between Long Island and Sweden. (Currently, he's based in San Francisco.)

AT THE tail end of the 1970s, the Codona group was formed (with Collin Walcott and Nana Vasconcelos) recording three enduring albums for ECM. Live, the trio could be frustratingly digressive – or perhaps my low tolerance for marathon berimbau solos is a personal failing – but the records are all delightful, with a fast turnover of focused ideas. From "Colemanwonder", the brilliant juxtaposition of two Ornette tunes with Stevie Wonder's "Sir Duke" on the first album to "Clicky Clicky", the hypnotic train blues (sung by Don) on *Codona III*, the group consistently finds fresh things to play, sensitivities heightened by the crystal clear studio sound. In the studio, at least, they bore out Cherry's and Walcott's claim that it was possible to blend the most divergent folk resources without turning the whole world into milktoast.

Old And New Dreams, a reunion of Coleman alumni (Cherry/Redman/Haden/Blackwell), put out albums on Black Saint and ECM and were big on the festival circuit for a while. Watching them play I often had the feeling, perhaps wrongly, that Cherry was a little distant from the others, his ebullience toned down, as if questioning the value of an Ornette group without Ornette. Certainly, his compositions for that group were the furthest away from Ornette's concept. (On the other hand, when the original Coleman quartet was reunited for the 1987 *In All Languages* tour, the trumpeter, to Ornette's chagrin, was continually hankering to play the old pieces: Cherry does have his sentimental streak.) But the *El Corazón* album, picking up where *BYG's Ma, Parts One And Two* had left off, was perfect, a marvellous illustration of Cherry's faith in the value of simplicity.

Step-daughter Nene's involvement in post-punk pop led to Don's association with Rip, Rig & Panic and his guest appearance on *I Am Cold*, and from there it was a small step to his gigs with Lou Reed and Ian Dury. This startled those who did not know of Cherry's affection for rock, although he'd jammed with Gong in France and played on Steve Hillage's *L*, and his own *Hear And Now* had posited a sort of mantra-rock, with only vaguely defined notions of what commerciality might mean. "Commercial success is a lot like hitchhiking.

You gotta have a lot of patience."

Some folks figured Don would finally crack it with *Home Boy, Sister Out*. ("This album is for drinking and dancing.") Tracks like "Rappin' Recipe" and "Reggae To The High Tower" had singles potential, possibly. But if you're really aiming at the charts, you don't call up Magma's bassist.

Much of the best of his work in the 1980s never made it to the studios at all. A 1983 group with L Shankar and Ed Blackwell, for instance, in which Cherry played in an intense note-crammed style that recalled his work with Ayler. (Check *Tailok Gurtu's* 1988 album *Ufret* for a taste of Shankar and Cherry together.) And Don's group Nu was a beautifully comprehensive unit. Cherry and altoist Carlos Ward found a real understanding here and the music dealt with all of Cherry's history, going back to the blues, working through a lyrical variety of free jazz and circumnavigating the teepees and geodesic domes of the global village on pieces like "Bird Boy", "Art Deco", "Guinea" and other hymns simultaneously ancient and modern.

"Art Deco", performed in radically different interpretations by Nu and on the *Home Boy* session, was transformed again last year when it reappeared as the title track on Cherry's first American album in a decade, a nostalgic dare reuniting Don with a pre-Ornette partner, long-lost Texan tenorist James Clay: suddenly it sounded like a standard we'd known before, the scarcely playing of Clay lending it "classic" status . . .

AND NOW the ever-roving Cherry's in California, where he's recently completed a Mass For All Religions, a most appropriate commission, for San Francisco's Grace Cathedral. And he's been working with Peter Apfelbaum's Hieroglyphics Ensemble, a 15-piece Berkeley-based unit of long-standing.

Apfelbaum, a multi-instrumentalist, is also at the centre of Multi Kulci, Cherry's new band. I caught the group at the Frankfurt Festival earlier this year, and Peter seemed to be the player most often directing the flow of the music, a strong presence on keyboards and saxophones. Drummer Hamid Drake was convincing on both traps and tabla, too; electric bassist Earl "Bo" Freeman was there to lay down solid grooves.

Cherry himself was at his most playful. He danced a lot – looking far younger than his 54 years – sang a lot, tried to get the audience to sing along with an old Codona tune (it's not easy to break through German reserve) and offered thanks and praise to God, Nelson Mandela, the Spring and the Frankfurt Musikmesse. "Don't you think it's beautiful, all these craftsmen who make things with their hands?" Guess he hadn't spent a lot of time around the Casio and Roland stands. (Don's sunniness is a thrown gauntlet for cynics.)

The performance was low-key, relaxed, friendly. Don Cherry proving that he no longer needs to prove anything, but almost absent-mindedly tossing off trumpet solos that were marvels of melodic concision. "Not a virtuoso or a technician", the liner notes to *Art Deco* warn us. A matter of definitions, I think. When he raises that little horn to his lips, you know the former soccerer's apprentice has mastered all the magic. ■

HERE'S SOMETHING from the introduction penned by the American critic Francis Davis for his new collection, *Outcasts* (Oxford, 261pp, \$22.95): "I seldom go to parties, but when I do, the people to whom I'm introduced have no idea what they're supposed to say when I tell them that I make my living writing about jazz. Talking to me as if I was a fan rather than a writer, they sometimes ask me where's a good place in town to hear jazz. I tell them that the question they should be asking is which jazz performers are worth searching out, and the conversation usually ends there." And he can't resist adding: "This is probably just as well, because they wouldn't like the performers I recommended, anyway."

Ah, the charmed, hermetic life of the jazz critic! If this strikes a narcissistic note — a jazz-directed magazine discussing jazz writers — it's only appropriate since Davis is, like so many of the younger American jazz scribes, an author who can't keep himself out of his work. He starts a discussion of Bobby Darin with an anecdote about singing "Mack The Knife" in high school; recalls accosting Norman Mailer on a line to the Sweet Basil men's room; and tells the tale of meeting a drunk who claimed to have once danced with Billie Holiday. Davis projects himself relentlessly on to his subject matter, as though trying to fathom out the closest truth he can get to by scrutinising all his own responses. Some would recoil from the lack of "critical detachment" — it certainly sits awkwardly with our own, cooler tradition of Harrison, Fox, Priestley and Thacker — while others might consider that Davis often fogs over simple opinion with a wealth of political and cultural allusion.

Why raise these notes and tones at all? Because Davis himself has a beef with jazz writing. Further along in his introduction, he says that "I feel jazz journalism is in crisis", with older critics deserting their posts and younger ones "committed only to what's fashionable". He may be right, although a crisis in jazz journalism is likely to bother only other jazz journalists. Suitably enough, there's a jousting tone to much of his commentary. He comes down hard on the new Brooklyn musicians and their eclecticism, suggesting

that their unfinished kind of crossover is lauded not through intrinsic merit but because jazz itself isn't seen as "exotic or sexy enough". He has harsh words for the Manassis philosophy, although that's hardly a radical view: supporting Wynton is surely less fashionable than stoning him these days. Davis doesn't shirk from either making judgements or from saying that he's unsure what his final judgement should be. "You feel like you're reading an honest man," says Pauline Kael in the blurb, and she's right.

It's appropriate to wonder, though, how well this lone-wolf journalism translates to the permanence of the bookshelf. "Outcasts" is a term that can be applied to musicians and fans alike, since we're all disenfranchised from the cultural mainstream, working or camping out in the margins, where the question of survival tends to take precedence over notions of the one true way. Jazz writing can be charged with luxuriating in aesthetic questions that are themselves marginal, and anyone who works at it for long enough starts to wonder who they're writing for and what difference it makes. The iron reality that the audience has more use for simple information (what's the new David Murray album called?) over incisive evaluation (how good is it?) is the bullet which most of us have to bite.

But that's an especially mordant view. All of us are confident that all of you are graceful, intelligent beings (like ourselves) prepared to entertain a forum for the flow of ideas. In a sense, if we consider jazz as an art in a constant state of flux, all writing on it can only be an interim report. Yet this always seems to infect most jazz criticism with middleweight authority, a sense of journeyman analysis that, however eloquent, is built on shifting conceptual sands. The problem with *Outcasts* and Davis's previous collection *In The Moment* — as well as with Gary Giddins's collections — is that, revised as they are by the author, they're still magazine-article scrapbooks, written in and of the instant, transitional documents. I don't think the crisis is in jazz journalism, which is inevitably subject to "fashion", as is all kinds of reportage; it's in jazz scholarship, which for whatever reason is scarcely finding any feasible published outlet at present. The

one book to attempt a comprehensive narrative discussion of post-Coleman jazz remains John Litweiler's *The Freedom Principle*, which already demands a fresh edition. Promised books by the likes of Stanley Crouch have never appeared.

So we're left with the likes of *Outcasts* as the witness to an era. It's certainly an elegant and compelling record. The 37 profiles date from 1986-89, which makes it the most contemporary book of its kind, and the coverage is admirably catholic. While most would choose only their most celebrated interviewees for such a book, Davis democratically includes lesser lights in his gaze into the firmament: Borah Bergman, Errol Parker and Odean Pope, for instance, as well as such unlikely subjects as Bobby Darin, Mort Sahl and Bobby Short. Most of the pieces are based around interviews, and he has a good eye as well as ear for a character, without descending into Whitney Balliett's novelistic prose.

Like every one of the newer critics, Francis is something of an eclectic himself, who can bandy around names as disparate as Prince and Jabbo Smith and still make you think that he knows what he's talking about. He obviously loves film — you're as likely to find cinematic cross-references to Cukor, Alan Rudolph, Hitchcock or Godard as to other jazz musicians — and is bound up in the love-hate ordeal which a city instils into its inhabitants: this is a memoir of jazz in the jungle of urban rents, television culture and two-drink minimums.

Some of the interview pieces don't add up to all that much, and I prefer it when Davis lets his own voice do the talking: he puts in a courageous piece on Lester Young which confesses the secret fear that most later Pres really isn't much good, no matter what the last round of revisionists said, and there are some shrewd insights into such untouchable figures as Cecil Taylor and Sun Ra.

In other words, this is a fine, splendidly readable, skillfully written collection. After two such compilations, though, Francis's publishers should be prepared to let him do something else — and they should also employ a proofreader who doesn't let through such a disgraceful number of mistakes.

RICHARD COOK

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Fred Wesley is best known as James Brown's

right-hand man, a funk trombonist of

excellence. But his roots are in blues, he played

with Bessie and his new recording is straight-

ahead bebop. Ben Watson gets inside the 'house.'

Photo by Mervin/Gammar.

"We speak of love and happiness; for me, happiness is Fred Wesley, playing his horn . . ." James Brown

(Intro to the title track of *Damn Right I Am Somebody* by Fred Wesley and the JB's).

THE FRED Wesley story cuts right across the supposed boundaries of black American music, demonstrating once again that jazz is musician's music, the genre of the craft, regardless of ostensible prowess.

First of all, though: Fred Wesley is the funk trombone player. In 1968 he joined James Brown's band and recorded "Say It Loud I'm Black And I'm Proud", becoming a crucial participant in what is arguably James Brown's most effective period: *Food For Thought*, *The Payback* and, under Wesley's name, the definitive black consciousness funk album of the 70s, *Damn Right I Am Somebody*. These are records of such weight and thrust that it is small wonder that they have been scratched and sampled to death. They underlay almost every rap track of the late 80s.

Fred Wesley's career casts a fascinating light on the development of black music and its associated technology. One of the first influences was the jukebox.

"I lived a lot at my grandmother's in Mobile Alabama, and where I slept was right next to the Blue Diamond Cafe. There was a juke box right on the wall there, so I went to bed every night and woke up every morning to the blues, serious blues, so I'm sure that has something to do with my development."

Then there was the glamour of the instrument itself: "Growing up, my father had a big band, so I heard a lot of things like 'The Hucklebuck', 'Open The Door, Richard',

'Little Red Top'. My grandmother was a piano teacher, so I was on the piano at two, three years old, but I hated it. I wanted to play a horn because all these horn players used to come to my daddy's house for rehearsal. I finally got into horns when I went to Junior High, with my bandmaster EB Coleman. He wrote me out a solo for 'Tuxedo Junction', I was about 12 years old, and I became a little star around the school because I would play a bebop solo. I got a lot of experience from him, because he'd write things that ordinary high school bands wouldn't do, little jazz things, so that exposed me to jazz at a very early age."

LOCAL MUSICIAN Waymon Reed recommended Wesley to James Brown: it became his first professional gig. The original offer of a fixed salary — rather than gig money — sounded fabulous, until it struck home that the Hardest Working Man In Showbusiness worked nightly. There was little chance to practise jazz.

"I never got to the New York jazz scene, the LA jazz scene. When I got to New York I was the famous Fred Wesley — it stayed at that until I got a chance to do an album. You know, when you're doing the James Brown show you don't take a week off to do a jazz album, because it requires a bit of practice to get your chops together to play jazz. You can't do dat-de-de-dat through the years and suddenly go be-dee-a-dee-dop-a-diddly-dee-dop, you have to kind of work into that."

Wesley became an arranger and producer, though he is adamant that James Brown was in charge.

"A lot of the music you hear from James Brown, the JB's and Lyn Collins is the result of James communicating some idea to me, maybe humming certain lines to me, and we'd put



it together and record it. The only thing I take credit for is being the implementer of James Brown's ideas."

Wesley has kept in touch with James Brown in prison. They are planning a co-production. You get a glimpse of James Brown's special genius when you hear Wesley was curious about what he may have "come up with since he has been incarcerated".

With their crazy satirical record covers and multilayered references to sex and politics, the Parliament/Funkadelic albums seem like a different world from James Brown's roadshow. Was that Wesley's impression at the time?

"Musically it seemed a natural progression from James Brown to the P-Funk thing. When I first heard those *Mothership Connection* tracks, the rhythm tracks Bootsy had laid down, it freaked me out. Boy, I said, this is some new funk, this is where it's going. I'm going to get a chance to be in on the first of the new stuff! I'm in! It was like saying goodbye to the old and hello to the new."

De La Soul overturned rap conventions by sampling Parliament records rather than James Brown's. Does Wesley object to such "borrowings"? "If it wasn't for the sampling, I'd probably be at home now rocking in my rocking-chair, retired. It kept the music alive."

Technology did have its downside, though: unemployment. Wesley found his experience with string and horn arrangements superseded: people used synthesizers for the job. The late 80s were a time of rest and relaxation – and woodshedding. He went to stay with his brother Ron Wesley, a jazz DJ in Denver, Colorado. It was Ron who put him in touch with his current quartet.

Wesley did have one experience of jazz outside his formative years in Mobile: a year with Count Basie in 1978. His eyes light up as he describes the experience.

"Waymon Reed, the great trumpet player, married to Sarah Vaughan, used to come through Mobile with a circus. He turned me on to the James Brown gig, then he went with Basie. So when they needed a trombone player they contacted me. I went, 'Wow! Count Basie! I'm just straight off a Bootsy's Rubber Band gig – play loud and hard as you can, long as you can, right? – all of a sudden I've got to play 'Lil' Darlin'', real soft and quiet; and if you can imagine an elephant in a bunny rabbit parade, there I was. They was looking at me, frowning, but Basie was a nice guy, I liked him and I think he liked me right off, so he let me hang on until I kind of gelled in there. It was rough at first. I practised after the gig and before the gig. Where I was sitting was the best seat in the house! It didn't pay that much, and my wife'd say, 'When are you gonna get a gig that makes some money?' And I'd say, 'Baby, I'm having a great time.'"

Wesley talks frankly about his technical limitations. "There's a lot of things I do that are technically wrong. Like I hold the slide with one finger, instead of two and a thumb. Most trombone players double-tongue – I've never learned. Most trombone players use fake positions – I use some, but it's not a big part of what I do. All single notes and playing all

natural positions means I move the slide faster, probably, and more."

Perhaps it is these natural positions that give Wesley's funk playing its unbeatable flare. Playing jazz, it may deprive him of JJ Johnson's agile grace, but it guarantees him a personal sound. As his jazz chops improve – and he has recruited a cracking quartet – the sparks should fly.

"Joe Bonnet [piano] has played with Freddie Hubbard, he's on a lot of Pharoah Sanders's albums. Bruno Carr [drums] you may know from the Ray Charles band, he's played with everybody from Charlie Parker on: his most memorable gig was with Herbie Mann. Ken Walker is an excellent bass player – I mean, world class, I couldn't think of anyone better."

"I'm really enthused with Benny Golson these days, he is such a great writer. I just learned 'I Remember Clifford'. For a long time I couldn't get past the first eight bars without the tears running out of my eyes. The song is so pretty that even when I think about it, it fills me up. He has so many great tunes – 'Along Came Betty', 'Domingo' – I got so deep into him."

JAZZ is a great tradition, but it is shamefully underfunded. It is important to be aware of the economic facts behind what we hear. James Jamerson, whose bass was the pivot for countless Motown hits, was originally lured to Berry Gordy's label by promises of a bebop album. It never materialised. Wesley has been there too.

"I was turned down by every label I know about in the States. I got, 'Yeah, Fred, it's really nice, man, but give us some of that funk.' James Brown did that to me: he did a jazz album for me – Dave Matthews arranged it. But it's just sitting on the shelf somewhere."

This interview came about because a small dance-oriented label in London called Hi-Note got interested in Fred Wesley and decided to release *To Someone*. It has also recorded some funk tunes with him. Label owner Richard Mazda had some success with Wall Of Voodoo in the early 80s, and more recently with Jamie J Morgan. As a method of funding jazz it certainly beats an arts council grant.

Under the name The JB's All-Stars, Fred Wesley, Maceo Parker and Pee Wee Ellis have cut 'I Like It Like That', a dance 12-inch. The session went so well they followed it with an album. Drum machine operator and long term Funkateer Richard Mazda has caught the classic JB's fat horn sound. He is in seventh heaven: "Every moment in the studio with Maceo and Fred and Pee Wee is high... when I get home my face aches because I've been smiling too much. My legs ache because I've been dancing around for 12 hours."

It is a credit to certain radical undercurrents in English pop – 2 Tone, Rip Rig & Panic, On-U Sound – that such appreciation of the entire tradition persists in companies necessarily geared to the white-label/DJ/dance-fever/char-hype routine. There is a continuity between Duke Ellington and Adonis: to pick on Fred Wesley to make that point is nothing short of inspired. ●

the horror! the horror!

For centuries, the names of God have inspired awe and terror in the hearts of men.

Now we can reveal the fourteen truth: God's real names are Kevin and Eugene.

Biba Kopf explains how their art of darkness has become the lifeblood of Hardcore 90.

TO KNOW God it's necessary to transcribe the trails scorched into the earth by the Hardcore of years past into the complex litany of feelings that is Hardcore 90.

Hardcore is the closest the present has got to a musical expressionism the match of Austrian-German *Schrei*/scream theatre circa WW1. Hardcore is the hyperthyroid throb of veins barely contained by the skin of performers who've internalised the fears and diseases of the contemporary world to the degree their blood sings out its frustrations as it seethes. Hardcore is about slamming up against the limits of expression, a broad enough definition that encompasses plenty. A quick rollcall takes in anything from Penderecki's pre-romantic threnodies of suffering, Albert Ayler and the Velvet Underground, through Scott *Climate Of Hunter* Walker, early Swans and Mark Stewart, to Einstürzende Neubauten, the Brötzmanns (*père et fils*) and Diamanda Galas.

For Hardcore 90 to have any validity it must know the immediate past in order not to directly repeat it. What distinguishes God from the rest of their ilk is the sensitivity that leads them up many a cul de sac of Hardcores Past, only to discover the membranes separating each of them is tissue-thin. Approaching them with sufficient speed or a persistent pendulum motion, they burst the membranes and let the other Hardcores bleed through. God's intermingling of bloods has promoted the metamorphosis that is Hardcore 90. The tension in their music results from the inner pulse raging to resist outside social pressure that would render the individual inert.

This pressured pulse is sustained by two drummers slipping in and out of phase with each other, establishing the roaring, heaving motion taken up by God's players in the cause of ripping themselves free of the prevailing inertia. Saxophone and guitars don't so much solo as rail against the noise, pushing and kneading it this way and that.

To be sucked into the vortex of God noise is to find yourself buffeted by all manner of conflicting emotions. Even as the depth of despair at its core makes itself felt, God's precise articulation of its horrors is in itself positively energising. Add to that the networking activities of God's vocalist/saxophonist Kevin, founder of the Pathological label. An inexhaustible enthusiast for crosswiring like spirits from seemingly alien disciplines, his Pathological is financing the world's first attempt to bring Peter Brötzmann together with guitarist son Caspar and Diamanda Galas. The twin attacks of God and Pathological make clear the immense and invaluable potential of Hardcore 90 and its invigorating role in the future of new music. Hence God's billing alongside John Zorn and AMM at Crawley.

IF HARDCORE 90 raises pangs of conscience to the pitch of pain, then where's the pleasure in it and who is it meant to hurt? Scill suffering from the draining effects of the previous night's concert, God's Kevin painstakingly formulates an answer. "There's no conscious decision of alienating an audience," he says, reassuringly. "We just want to make music that's directly physical and, in a way, that causes us a bit of pain for some reason. If the guitarist hits a chord that is painful to the ear, and it suits a feeling one of us has, then great, we build a piece around that. It's just a musical directness we're chasing, really..."

"Of late it's taken on more of a droning quality. The physical quality of this repetitive drone is proving to be quite stimulating to us, because more so than songwriting we're interested in the physical machinations of sound."

The physicality of God noise is the quality that places them at the crossroads of Hardcore 90 nihilism and the elemental freeplays of Peter Brötzmann's like. At this volume, pitch and density, their aspirations merge on a level of emotional articulation that leaves behind any considerations of how they got here. What's important is how the music makes itself felt.

Which isn't to imply God are punk primitivists, pure and simple. On the contrary they pressure a broad range of experience through a narrow gauge all the better to intensify those rare moments of true feeling. Its redemptive power, according to Kevin's colleague Eugene, vocalist in the after-apocalyptic West Coast Hardcore group Oxbow (who are also released here on Pathological), resides in the accuracy of its musical diagnoses.

"It redeems itself by virtue of the fact it makes horror the issue," proposes Eugene. "It tells a truth more than a falsehood and in that sense I find it redemptive."

The first great strength of God's music derives from the recognition of music's social impotence. Acknowledging the impossibility of art to effect the slightest change on a cultureless society such as Britain 1990, God give themselves up to satisfying their own desires. As such they are exemplary: inside or out, there's no other way forward. The paradox of Hardcore 90's continuing vitality is down to the inability of its adherents to sell their current selves short so their future selves can survive.

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God's *Dem Dem Slog* is featured on *The Pathological Compilation*. They've also released a 12" *Bruch Birth* (Beggar Banquet). Pathological's future releases include the Galas/Brötzmann project, Oxbow's *Fuck Fest* and, possibly, the Zorn/Sharp/Epstein group *Slam*.



WHY BUY a jazz video? It was a good question until recently, with a paucity of interesting material available and music-video marketers paying scant attention to jazz as a subject. But recent incursions by Polygram and BMG have focused attention on the music as an area with good video potential. There must be much more archive material on jazz than there is on rock, and American PBS and European television can be fruitful sources for more recent stuff.

The pioneers, nevertheless, remain in the forefront in the UK's jazz video market. Castle Hendring have added another handful of new titles to their video catalogue and continue to show a more considered commitment to jazz than their grander rivals. At least you get the feeling off their products that this is made by people who know about the music, pitching it squarely at a *bona fide* jazz audience.

Dizzy Gillespie: A Night In Havana (colour, 86 minutes) is the already well-known documentary on John Birks's visit to the country whose music he helped to introduce to a wider American audience. Dizzy is such a compelling on-screen personality that I could have spent 86 minutes simply watching him talk, and there is some good interview footage (he talks about the famous poaches, how his strength to blow comes from his ass, and how he wrote "A Night In Tunisia" – "all I had to do was write the bridge", he shrugs, chomping on a cigar). John Holland's direction is competent and he falls victim to the trap of interspersing concert shots with too much of a tourist persuasion, but it's a sunny, engaging snapshot of Dizzy on holiday. The old man sounds in smart form on the concert material and he reckons that in 15 years' time, all these sounds will be "integrated" – that's when you'll really hear some music.

I hadn't seen all of *Ten Days That Shook Soho*

(or *Jazz'm' Soho*, colour, 64 minutes, as it's now titled) before. This fast-forward through the Soho Jazz Festival of '86 already looks nostalgic. There's young Steve Williamson blowing with the awful Yes/No People, and there go Team Ten (also terrible), Marc Almond (jazz?), Stan Tracey (all you see are Stan's hands on a TV in a shop window!) and Courtney Pine (whose singer gets more camera-time). The producers seemed to have the idea of making it into a kind of beat memoir too, so there are various bizarre shots of fish, Soho nightcrawlers and Peter Boizot. The best bit is the inspired casting of Tommy Chase as a pore-show doorman.

How It Should Be Done is displayed instead on Bert Stern's lovely, glowing *Jazz On A Summer's Day* (B&W/colour, 77 minutes), which Hendring have also rereleased. Giuffrè, Monk, Mulligan, Strick, O'Day, Louis and Mahalia in warm campfire colours, the audience capturing a young America that would never be seen by cameras again, everything ageless yet old and long-gone. If you only want one jazz video, it ought to be this one.

The company has also picked up four live shows recorded in New Orleans at some point in the late 80s, each running for 60 minutes. *Stephen Grappelli* does his customary thing for an hour – charming, fragrant chamber-jazz without much spit but plenty of polish. Hendring also have another Grappelli video, *La San Francisco* (60 minutes, colour), which is virtually the same – the two sets duplicate five tunes and the beatific old master is probably playing the same licks. I prefer the New Orleans set for the picture quality, though.

Jack Sheldon does a mildly entertaining, faintly bawdy sort of set with a decent band that includes a man of more deadpan humour, Dave Frishberg, who concentrates on piano and looks at the keyboard with the air of a

bank teller who's just been asked to change a 5000-kopec note into dollars. The set by *The Duke Of Dixieland* I pass on, but surprisingly the pick of the bunch is *Toots Thielemans*, whose quartet session is unstintingly imaginative, modern and hip. The set-list includes tunes by Monk and Thad Jones and the quartet features the excellent piano of Fred Hersch, Harvey Schwartz on bass and Adam Nussbaum on drums. This is one video where the music sustains even the limitations of a routine camera set-up.

Finally from Hendring, a useful compilation of their various Ronnie Scott's sessions, *Jazz At Ronnie's* (90 minutes, colour): Baker, Simone, Blakey, Chico and the rest in the pick of nine different sets, and a sensible and entertaining package it makes.

Virgin Music Video are stepping a little more cautiously into the fray. They've released five different sessions which were filmed in New York in 1962 at the behest of Good Year – jazz has always been blessed with briefly generous sponsors in this way. If you check David Meeker's book, you can find more of the same. Each video is rather short at 25 minutes, but the visual quality is good (bright, are deco colours on austere sets) and the sound truly excellent for its time – you can hear Louis Armstrong cough and Duke Ellington mumble. Wild Bill Davison is one of the featured soloists with *Eddie Condon's All Stars*; Condon introduces each number with a Capone-like "Are ya ready, boys? One, two..." And they always start at a different tempo. Solid dixieland, all the time. *Mike Bryan* was executive producer on the series, and the ex-Goodman guitarist leads a swinging sextet through some BG faves such as "Seven Come Eleven" – Moussie Alexander comes on like Gene Krupa's number one son, and Doc Severinsen is surprisingly terse and exuberant on trumpet.



jazz on a summer's day

Video these illustrations by FIONA HAWTHORNE.

The *Louis Armstrong* set is a bit tired, with the All Stars looking starchy and listless and Pops lumbered with having to sing the likes of "C'Est Si Bon"; but it's worth having for the two-and-a-half minutes that he takes to sing and blow a magisterial chorus on "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen", which is latter-day Louis at his most moving. *Duke Ellington* wasted few opportunities, and he packs his 25 minutes with interesting music: "Blow By Blow" is a typically intense Paul

Gonsalves feature, "VIP Boogie/Jam With Sam" is a fun episode for several soloists, and "Satin Doll" is revised into a feature for Aaron Bell. Most doubtful aspect: Duke's hairstyle.

My favourite, though, is that great man *Bobby Hackett* leading a sextet with urbane Urbie Green, college boy Bob Wilber and tough nut Dave McKenna in the ranks. Crummy material - "The Saints", "Bill Bailey" (which Bobby introduces with "Here's a tune that seems to have achieved some popularity",

in a way that suggests he can't understand why) - but this impeccable group makes lovely jazz out of it. Green looks and even sounds like Bob Brookmeyer, only even sharper, and Hackett is simply peerless: he plays his solo on "Deed I Do" on three gulps of air, and he doesn't put a note wrong anywhere. This is the kind of thing you wait for to turn up on film archive nights; now you can watch it on video, too.

MIKE FISH

After Hendrix

room full of mirrors

To Steve Lacy he was "like a god"; B B King

called him "a great, great musician"; Miles Davis bagged his tailor! Jimi Hendrix was a towering inferno on guitar

but, two decades after his passing, his legacy remains a paradox. Did he electrify Miles and Ornette? Can he be

blamed for jazz-rock and heavy metal? And who are his true inheritors – Page and Blackmore or Ulmer and

Sharrock? Ben Watson traces 20 years of crosstown traffic. Photo by David Redfern.

JIMI HENDRIX'S guitar has been slow to register in jazz. Only in the last few years have guitarists emerged whose debt to Hendrix seems obvious. Why has it taken so long for such a pre-eminent voice to be applied to interactive improvisation?

Hendrix's origins are important, even if he saw them as shackles (his famous retort to a reporter's "I'm from the *New York Times*" was "Hello, I'm from Mars"). Hendrix came from Seattle. Up to his "discovery" by Chas Chandler, The Animals' bass player, at Greenwich Village's Cafe Wha? in 1966, his musical career included spells with Little Richard, Arthur Lee (leader of the soft-rock/psychedelic folk band Love), the Isley Brothers and soul singers Curtis Knight and Lonnie Youngblood.

The legacy of 50s R&B chitlin'-circuit guitar exhibitionism is highly relevant. T-Bone Walker – whose own career stretched back to the beginnings of recorded blues, accompanying Ma Rainey and Ida Cox in the minstrel shows of the 1920s – was the great galvanizer: playing the guitar behind his head, with his teeth, running through the audience; developing a set of scinging, swing-related licks that formed the basis of rock'n'roll guitar.

Then came Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Guitar Slim and Johnny "Guitar" Watson, a trio of brazen show-offs. They were competing with tenor honkers who would roll on the floor and whip up a storm with one-note tantrums. Quoth Johnny "Guitar": "I used to do some fantastic things like playing the guitar while standing on my hands. I used to have a 150-foot cord and I could get on top of the auditorium, come in from the walls. Those things Jimi Hendrix was doing – I started that shit, but you would have been down in the earth to know." (1)

HENDRIX ALSO related to the expressive, soaring blues of BB King. His flowering in London was very much due to the relative preeminence of blues there, compared to its disfavour as "old-time" music in black America. But Hendrix was also influenced by the blues' successor: the new soul feeling of the early 60s, the influx of the chaotic ecstasy of the

black church into secular music. Guitars became slacker, more blaring, less jazzy and clean: in "Testify" by the Isley Brothers, Hendrix plays wild guitar to their attack on "plastic" emotions. Hendrix referred to pop as "tinsel music": like Sheffield's Paul Reid, he judges music against the emotional honesty of gospel.

Another ingredient was the back-to-roots folk movement, often derided for its condescension (toothless bluesman plays to polite college kids, etc). Surfacing in England as skiffle, and then the rock music of the Stones, it was available to Hendrix in the Greenwich Village folk clubs and put him in touch with the strange voodoo of rural blues: scraping washboards and inaccurate harmonicas. All this served to prepare a music whose raw immersion in instrumental sound was the diametric opposite to post-bop jazz.

Jazz had allegedly polarized into cool (West Coast) versus soulful (Hard Bop), but even the latter was exactly sophisticated. It adopted the Hammond organ, but stopped short of righteous tambourines, screaming vocals and out-of-order guitars. Grant Green is a lovely hard bop guitarist, but compared to the mid-60s extrapolations of John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy his muse is reined in.

Hendrix arrived in London, recruited two of the best local musicians – Noel Redding (bass) and Mitch Mitchell (drums) – and promptly produced some of this century's most important music. For four years the most advanced exponent of improvised electronics was a pop star, had hits, had enough money to make decent records.

It is instructive to watch Hendrix on video. Left-handed, he will wave the guitar in his right hand whilst hammering on, catching different areas of feedback in the stagespace. Whether or not these were deliberately prepared – as some argue – he shows an improviser's sensitivity to the sounds unleashed. His control of raw chaos is quite unearthly, as if some kind of magic is transforming all the diabolical noises PAs are capable of into a swooping, total music of the future.

It is not merely the solos. Understandably, jazz musicians want to claim Hendrix as their own, pointing out his jams with Miles, his interest in playing to Gil Evans's arrangements



(2). True enough, but he was not about to do blowing dates. After all, "progress" was on *everyone's* lips in 1970. As important as the instrumental glory are the classic riffs. These romanticized abstractions of fundamental blues are simultaneously tootsy and exultingly exotic. Mitch Mitchell's fast, explosive drumming (he was a fan of Elvin Jones) was crucial: without such energy and independence these riffs easily become (and did become) the leaden dirges of heavy rock.

It matters also that Hendrix formed a band that worked together. Try as he might, a modern virtuoso like Steve Vai can only noodle up and down the fret to the click-tracks of his unresponsive studio. It is still rock's great strength that groups work for years as units: a method more conducive to originality than jazz promiscuity.

Hendrix only made four studio albums: *Are You Experienced?*, *Axis: Bold As Love*, *Electric Ladyland* and *Cry Of Love* – every one a masterpiece. This achievement has been blunted by the welter of pre-Experience "live documents" and posthumous scavenging. Hendrix played the studio with the same abandon and precision that he did the guitar, because for him sound *matters*. His control of multi-track technology evolves: Prince obviously took note of his experiments with slowed and speeded and backwards tape. Hendrix captured the unique *body* of his live guitar, bringing speakers into the studio for feedback alchemy. The sonic richness and uninhibited use of stereo is stunning. Only Captain Beefheart manages to equal this combination of heavy blues and lush exoticism.

Hendrix was the improviser who learned to conjure music from the interaction of the electric guitar, the amplifier and a wall of Marshall's substance and colour in ambient space. It was about moving blocks of air around. He played to huge crowds, a musical realization of the idea that collective action could stop wars, topple governments: social art. That partly explains why the sounds that resulted were so hard to apply to jazz.

AS THE promises of 1968 failed to materialize amidst the compromise of a series of reformist governments, jazz was in no position to grab such revolutionary optimism. As the 70s proceeded, the new voices, notably in the New York loft scene – David Murray, Henry Threadgill, Arthur Blythe – were intent on absorbing the new vocabulary of Albert Ayler and Archie Shepp into something demonstrably in the tradition. This was a heads-down insistence on the intimacy and non-commercialism of acoustic interaction: Hendrix's power and radio-brashness were consigned to the rock dumpster.

Indeed the influence of Hendrix appeared to be universally baneful. Mickie Most's erstwhile studio hack Jimmy Page formed Led Zeppelin, as clean and commercial a project as it pretended to be heavy and threatening. Ginger Baker was, like Mitch Mitchell, an eventual drummer. He could force great outings from Eric Clapton: Cream, even at their most excessive, were worthwhile. Savoy Brown, Fat Mattress, Blind Faith less so. Heavy metal – when Americans started repaying the British in kind with fuzzbox Beach Boys – is well, the pits.

And it *all* models itself on Hendrix.

The only white rock that caught some of what Hendrix meant (without falling into the tawdry self-consciousness of Glam) included early Chrome, Jeff Simmons and Spirit. In black music things were more interesting. Psychedelic soul – The Temptations, the blackploitation soundtracks of JJ Johnson, Curtis Mayfield and Isaac Hayes – created a timebomb that exploded later as acid house. In England, Eddy Grant produced an intriguing successor to The Equals called The Sundae Times, a black trio singing psychedelic soul numbers with power chords and a firm, rocksteady-derived beat (3). Bootsie Collins devised a whole stage persona from Hendrix (and adopted his singing voice) and Funkadelic embraced the guitar sounds. Finally, though, the James Brown groove won out in the George Clinton circus: the Hendrix influence was just colouring. His explosive rock riffs were left to heavy metal.

The more progressive soul outfits (Kool & the Gang, Cameo) would employ an "out" guitarist – generally a white hippie – to rant and rave on occasion: this was brought to a climax when Michael Jackson's "Beat It" featured the freeze-dried catholic-blasted guitar of Eddie Van Halen. What had happened to the black guitar player?

MILES DAVIS, who can generally be relied on to say things others dare not, claimed he used white guitarists because black guitar players would not "play long enough on the blues". The lack of interest in the guitar *has* to be seen in the light of the alienation of black musicians from the blues, its presentation as a form fostered by Eric Clapton, Dire Straits and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

Bitches Brew was jazz's first attempt to measure up to rock and to Jimi Hendrix. For the session, Miles used John McLaughlin, the latest whizzkid guitarist from the UK. The disassociation of the rhythm section from the other instruments, which on Eric Dolphy's *Out To Lunch* and Miles's own *ESP* resulted in a challenging freedom for the soloists, here becomes a frigid parting, against which keyboards and horns can play what they like because it makes no difference. If Miles wanted jazz musicians to adopt the arrogance of stadium rock musicians, he succeeded perfectly: it does not matter *what* they play, it just has to be fast, assured, glossy.

Bitches Brew is a work of conceptual brilliance, but it was an aesthetic cul-de-sac. Practically everyone in the band went out and formed their own outfits. Fusion was born: jazz musicians can out-play anybody, it was reasoned, so progressive rock is child's play. Actually, the whole project of "progressive" rock was a bourgeois fallacy, because "complexity" (odd time signatures, funny keys) is not in itself a good thing. Academic definitions ignore all the complications of timbre, hesitation and response in the blues. Mahavishnu Orchestra, Larry Coryell, Al Di Meola: an aesthetic disaster.

In *Wire 72* Paul Gilroy took exception to similar comments made by Charles Shaar Murray in his book on Hendrix (4). He

continued on page 71



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be the packaging that
sells Wild Turkey. So it
must be the name.
Mustn't it?

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TURKEY**

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axe of the apostles

Before Hendrix, all roads led back to Charlie

Christian – the man who invented electric jazz guitar. Stuart Nicholson traces the lineage of Christian disciples,

from Tal Farlow and Wes Montgomery to John Scofield and Bill Frisell. Archive photo of Charlie Christian.

IT WAS James Lincoln Collier who finally said it. A lot of people must have felt the same way. The jazz history books build you up for the great revelation but when you hear the recordings there's a sense of anti-climax. Listening to Charlie Christian for the first time, you don't get the feeling of a pivotal force at work, of a point in history when things are about to change forever.

"Young musicians today are sometimes puzzled by the high place Christian holds in jazz history," said Collier, "they hear more recent guitarists playing faster and using more complex ideas than Christian did."

In fact, it's only by listening to the Christian *legacy* that you get a sense of his importance in the evolution of the jazz guitar in particular and the electric guitar in general.

While there had been other virtuoso guitarists in jazz before Christian, Eddie Lang in the 20s and Django Reinhardt in the 30s, neither threatened the primacy of horn players the way he did. Even bluesman Robert Johnson, who although murdered in 1937 had anticipated the cathartic powers of Hendrix himself with just acoustic guitar and bottleneck, gave no premonition of the extent the guitar would dominate the music of the second half of the 20th century.

That honour usually rests with a young Oklahoman who was born in 1919, was discovered in 1939 but was forced into retirement through ill-health just two short years later, only to die in 1942. It was Christian who, after a 1937 meeting with Eddie Durham of the Count Basie band (an early experimenter

in electrifying the guitar), became the first major improviser in jazz to adopt the electric guitar. A masterful blues player, his suave licks were not only plundered by Benny Goodman, with whom he leapt to international acclaim in 1939, they were also used by T-Bone Walker, a boyhood friend and powerful influence on a young BB King – who in turn influenced countless contemporary bluesmen who followed. Through them, Christianisms soon became public domain blues tiffs, mercilessly worked to death by the likes of Chuck Berry during the 1950s. Equally, Christian's friendship and informal musical contact with steel guitarist Noel Boggs extended his influence further when Boggs became a member of the Bob Willis Band, a seminal Western Swing group that pioneered a fusion between bluegrass and country music, underpinned by the rhythmic swing of jazz.

HAD CHRISTIAN lived he would have undoubtedly become a major figure in the burgeoning bebop movement. He was working, along with several like-minded young musicians, at expanding the diatonic conventions of swing into chromaticism. His frequent use of the upper intervals of chords – ninths and elevenths – and his use of a diminished chord in place of dominant seventh, would soon become a commonplace among the beboppers. If you look at Charlie Parker at about the same time (compare Parker's solo on the

continued on page 72



*“Ooooh, Ooooh, A
Mmm, Mmm, Uu
Hahhh, Hahhh, I
Mmmmm, Yea, Ye
Baby It’s Alright!”*

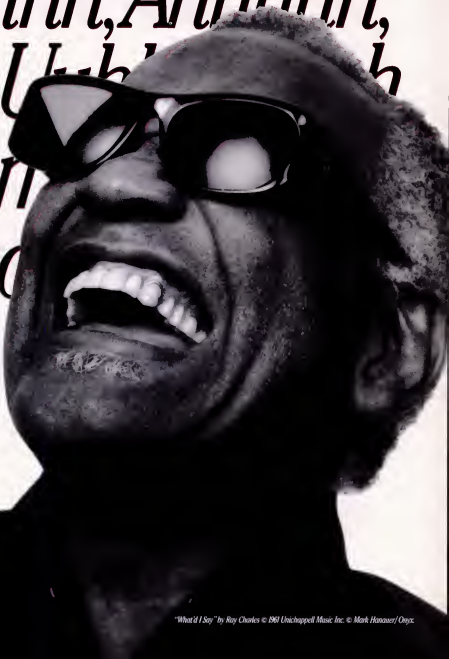
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hhhhh, Ahhhhhh,
hhh, Uh-h-h-h
Mmm
a, Oo



"What'd I Say" by Ray Charles © 1961 Unichappell Music Inc. © Mark Hansen/Oxy

castles made of sand

When he died, 20 years ago this month,

Jimi Hendrix was about to record with the great jazz arranger Gil Evans, who later released a tribute album of

Hendrix tunes and kept several in his book. But, argues Mike Fish, the rock/jazz culture clash at the heart of the

project had doomed it from the outset. Gil Evans photo by Derek Ridgers.

RECEIVED WISDOM has always had it that Gil Evans's near-miss association with Jimi Hendrix has constituted the guitarist's main contribution to contemporary jazz directions – that Evans's orchestrations of Hendrix's tunes suggested a jazz-rock collaboration of a different order to mere fusion. But the evidence, in the form of some of Gil's recorded efforts, suggests that this is another case history of mistaken identity.

Hendrix had been playing with the likes of Herbie Hancock in the months leading up to his death, and his planned collaboration with Evans is tantalising to reflect on. Some have suggested a variation on the arranger's work with Miles Davis, but if Hendrix had remained true to his own work, it's unlikely that he would have fitted into such a format. Which offers one clue to why *The Gil Evans Orchestra Plays The Music Of Jimi Hendrix* (Bluebird ND88409) seems so unsatisfactory.

Jimi died, as we know, a matter of weeks before the project could get under way. The RCA album was recorded some four years later as a tribute to the guitarist, and it's pertinent to wonder exactly how much input Evans had: only two of the arrangements ("Castles Made Of Sand", possibly the prettiest treatment of the date, and "Up From The Skies") are actually credited to him, the rest being shared between various hands, which may account for the piecemeal flavour of the session.

What hurts about the music is its ponderous nature, its elephantine attempts to find a groove. "Foxy Lady", for instance, is galumphing stuff, with the prissy electronics a poor substitute for the kind of soundstorm Hendrix could have created. "Voodoo Chile" is similarly unconvincing: Howard Johnson's tuba makes a preposterous choice for the lead instrument, and if he's trying to chop down a mountain with the ledge of his mouthpiece, he doesn't get very far.

In the liner notes to the reissue, Johnson comes up with a shrewd point or two: on his own playing, he says, "it was supposed to represent Jimi's guitar, loud and blaring, because none of our guitar players could do it – they were too hip and jazzy, even Ryo Kawasaki". Actually, the whole band is too hip and jazzy. Not that Hendrix was like some inspired

primitive, but it does suggest that his aesthetic was the kind of thing that made jazz seem old hat to people who would rather be progressively rocked.

What survives of Hendrix in that record are the best of his melodies: "Angel" becomes a gorgeous feature for David Sanborn (with the intro nicked from "Burning Of The Midnight Lamp") and the theme of "Up From The Skies", over walkin' bass parts, sounds a little like some cool piece of West Coast flannel. It was this sort of element that Gil Evans pursued, and just as the likes of "Bye Bye Blackbird" became blowing staples for Miles Davis, Evans stuck by "Little Wing", "Up From The Skies" and "Stone Free" as vehicles for his groups from then until the end of his life.

On those terms, Hendrix as a repertory figure works well enough. The timbral refinements and colouristic voicings which were the marrow of Evans's art might as well have been deployed on Hendrix themes as on anything else. But all that finally seems to happen is a filing-down of whatever passion infected Jimi's music in the first place.

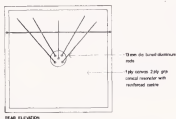
The versions of "Voodoo Chile" and "Little Wing" on 1984's *Live At Sweet Basil* (Electric Bird K23P63355), for instance, show little advance on the muddle of the RCA versions. Johnson is still parping through "Voodoo Chile", even if Hiram Bullock's R&B guitar makes a few feints in Jimi's direction to go with it. It makes one wonder, too, if a big ensemble could ever get near to the close-knit interplay of the original Experience. "Stone Free", one of the most electrifying of Hendrix's original records, sounds particularly overweight when translated to the big band.

The guitarist's brush with jazz at first hand doesn't seem very auspicious. In the hands of such sensible players as the group RMS, whose one-shot festival set with Evans on *Take Me To The Sun* (Last Chance LCM 002) has just been released for the first time, the music gleams with good chops and falls unremarkably on the ear. This version of "Little Wing" features Ray Russell's hopelessly tasteful guitar, and amounts to a complete rationalisation of Hendrix into fusion routine.

I don't think anyone started out with that in mind.







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Perhaps exactly the manifesto you'd expect from The Mekons' fiddle-player: a call to bring everything into anyone's reach. In fact, Susie Honeyman is also a member of Echo City, the collective whose self-set objective would be something like this — climbing frames full of "these instruments" (clangerphones, plataphones, barphones, fibrephones, baliphones, oxybells and boobongs) in every public space in the land, and children of all ages and abilities rattling and banging out their demons.

Echo City began operations in 1983, when instrument-makers David Sawyer and Giles Leaman and musicians Guy Evans and Giles Perring were asked to design and build instruments for a Sonic Playground at Weavers' Field in Bethnal Green, and a year later another one, at Hayward Adventure Playground for Handicapped Children. Since then, based round Perring, Evans, Honeyman and improvisers Paul Shearnsmith and Rob Mills, they've put out an LP (*Gramophone Date* DAILP 4.00336J), constructed many more instruments to make up a complete Mobile Playground, as well as staging workshops and elaborate audience-participation spectacles.

At present they're planning and fund-raising for a European Performance Project, which will visit six European cities and spend a week in each with a group of 50–60 people working towards a large-scale public improvisation, meant to "integrate the work of able-bodied and disabled performers irrespective of any 'professional' status".

"Whenever we set up the Mobile Playground for a day, it'll just be complete chaos and huge sound — people just beat the hell out of the instruments. If they're there for longer, or just after an hour of doing that, people actually start working out things, trying to make them speak a bit more. We put some in a school in Blackstock Road recently. The caretaker was going mad the first week! And then after the second week it was calming down and they were working out little tunes . . .

"They're not just for children. One of the main things about our gigs is that at the end, there's a chance for everyone to play. So they're not precious instruments. Adults don't so often get that chance to come up and bash away."

**clang,
boobong,
bing,
crack,
click,
thud and so on**

Sound and vision come together in the Echo City project. Mark Sinker watches the noise.

Photos by Leon Morris and Echo City.



Pee Wee Russell

a novel kind of grace *With a face like a bloodhound*

and sad-looking fust, Pee Wee Russell was destined to be treated as a clown. Even as a clarinetist he was an odd man out. But, as Martin Gayford explains, Pee Wee's big adventures gave us some of the most haunting sounds in jazz.

PEE WEE RUSSELL was the most unshakably individual of jazz musicians. He was an outsider, and he looks one, even in the old photographs of dinner-jacketed bands from the days of Coolidge and FDR. A lanky, moustachioed, bottle-shouldered figure, he rises awkwardly over the other players, his face a strange compromise between the physiognomies of George Orwell and Schnozzle Durante. As he blew, his features contorted into an anguished grimace, his body wound itself into a clumsy knot, and his clarinet rose in the air like an inexpertly-aimed hatpoin.

His music, too, was full of potentially embarrassing oddity. He would play notes that sounded like a dowager quivering with indignation, or, at other times, like an asthmatic duck. Sometimes he wrenched his solos violently against the chod sequence. His phrases were often unconscionably asymmetrical – starting perhaps with a crablike sidle across the beat, then abruptly rising into a squawk or falling away in a hoarse guttural. In short, he would do things which, in the context of the dixieland and swing from which he emerged, were simply off the board. He got away with it because – this was the wonderful thing about him – he had the gift that odd, clumsy people sometimes have of reshuffling on the spot of the moment a host of peculiarities into a novel kind of grace.

Lester Young had a similar will to be different, but Lester, to his distress, ended up with a flotilla of imitators. Pee Wee had no predecessors, and one solitary acolyte – an obscure player named Frank Chase. Where Pee Wee's music came from, goodness only knows. He sounds utterly unlike any New Orleans clarinetist I have ever heard. The Chicagoan Frank Teschemacher has been suggested as an influence, but Teschemacher, on recorded evidence, though he had something of the same abrasiveness of tone and staccato delivery, was a far more conventional performer, quite without Pee Wee's brilliant eccentricity of line, or freakish emotional range.

Bix Beiderbecke is a possible source; certainly he and Russell were very close in the early 20s – living together, playing together and together consuming a very unhealthy quantity of bootleg liquor. But Beiderbecke could only have encouraged Russell's harmonic adventurism in a general sort of way; as far as line and tone are concerned, Bix's playing was an infinitely more suave affair. Pee Wee's style must have come from within.

HE WAS born on 27 March 1906 and christened Charles Ellsworth. He was an only child. His father, a hotel steward when Russell was born, shortly afterwards struck gas in Muskogee, Oklahoma and consequently Russell was brought up in affluent circumstances. "My parents," he told Whitney Balliett in the course of an exemplary *New Yorker* profile ("Even His Feet Look Sad", 1962) "would say, You want this or that, it's yours. But I never really knew them. Not that they were cold, but they just didn't divulge anything." Russell's sense of being out of the crowd obviously started early, as did his determination to become a musician. Sent to Western Military Academy in Illinois, he "majored in wig-wags . . . and . . . lasted just a year". Released from the bizarrely inappropriate prospect of a military career, he joined a tent show and took off for Juarez, Mexico, where he promptly got drunk and landed in jail. He never looked back after that.

According to Balliett, he spoke "in a low, nasal voice, sometimes he stuttered, and sometimes whole sentences came out in a slucelike manner, and trailed off into mumbles and down-the-nose laughs" (a description, by the way, interestingly suggestive of Russell's approach to the clarinet). On the evidence of an old BBC interview, he had the tite American accent that transforms 'this' and 'that' into 'dis' and 'dat'. Was he the kind of musician for whom jazz represents a blessed escape from respectability into bohemia? It seems probable.



Certainly Pee Wee's life was rickety enough. In the 20s he kicked around the South and Mid-West, met up with Beiderbecke and Teagarden, then drifted to New York. Not a member of the original Eddie Condon/Austin High School gang of white Chicagoan musicians, he was drafted into the coterie after Teschemacher, their main clarinetist, was killed in a car accident. In the late 30s and early 40s, he was the most indispensable member of Condon/Chicago groups, and, as the butt of most of Condon's jokes, a minor radio celebrity.

The quantities drunk in those circles were lethal, and actually killed a number of the musicians involved. By and by, Russell was suffering from multiple cysts on the liver and undiagnosed pancreatitis – a condition that prevented him from digesting solid food throughout the 40s, during which decade he eked out an existence on brandy milk-shakes and scrambled-egg sandwiches. In 1950, by then a pathetic, skeletal figure, he almost died.

Later, Russell looked back unfavourably on the Condon years. "Those guys made a joke about me, and I let myself be treated that way because I was afraid. I didn't know where else to go, where to take refuge", he told Balliett. "When I was sick, I lived night by night. As a result, my playing was a series of desperations." It is easy to see why the jokes should have rankled. They make fairly grating listening on the old broadcasts. "This one features Pee Wee Russell," Condon will say, "The strong man of swing" (laughter) or "Uh oh, we can't start that number just yet, Pee Wee's still asleep" (titters). It's equally unpuzzling that the limited repertoire of the Condon gang – the eternal "Jazz Me Blues" and "Balling The Jack" – should have come to seem like a straitjacket. Certainly, in those days, Russell sometimes soloed like a man scything his way out of a chord-sequence in a frenzy of irritation, but, paradoxically, the results were often wonderful – thrilling, iconolastic, balanced-on-a-knife-edge.

After his illness, Pee Wee came back changed. Reunited with his wife, Mary, his mysterious ailment cured, his drinking a fraction more under control, he was a happier man. He sheered away from the Condon crew, and appeared more frequently on record with such 50s mainstreamers as Vic Dickenson, Buck Clayton and Ruby Braff. His playing became mellower; his repertoire broader, and his tone sometimes so gentle and fluttery as to seem scarcely more than breath, saliva and a sigh. By the early 60s, he was flirting openly with the avant-garde. In 1962 he formed a pianoless quartet with the valve trombonist, Marshall Brown, which performed material by, among others, Coltrane, Monk, and Ornette Coleman (admittedly the last of those in a re-harmonised form). This group made two albums, *Ask Me Now* and *New Groove*, which caused a mild sensation. A commonly-expressed view, by those not horrified by his apostasy, was that these showed Pee Wee to be a modern musician who had been born before his time. As Coleman Hawkins put it, "For 30 years I've been listening to him play those funny notes. Some musicians used to think they were wrong and even he used to think they were wrong. But they weren't. He's always been way out, but they

didn't have a name for it then."

Obviously, there is a good deal to be said for that view. I am not sure, however, that it quite catches the truth of the matter. Perhaps it would be better to say that Russell was a musician of a determinedly idiosyncratic type that has been represented in every jazz generation, Henry 'Red' Allen, Lester Young and Thelonious Monk being other notable examples. The two records with Marshall Brown are both perfectly successful and delightful albums (although Pee Wee, with typical contrariness, repudiated them later); but they do not stand head and shoulders above his other work – there is no sense of his having finally come home.

IN FACT, his best work in all periods was made in reaction to a strong musical context. He was inspired by having something, or someone, to react against, a psychological process which he described very clearly to Balliett: "In lots of cases, your solo depends on who you're following . . . it becomes a matter of silent pride. Not jealousy, mind you. A kind of competition. So I make myself a guinea pig – what the hell, I'll try something new." Thus his finest early recordings were "If I Could Be With You One Hour Tonight" and "Hello Lola", made with Hawkins in 1929, and the brilliant, helter-skelter Rhythmmakers tracks from 1932 where he is partnered by Henry Allen. Apart from his escapology with the Condon/Chicago groups, the best moments from his middle period occur on some wonderful quartet sides made in 1944 with, on piano, a perfect counterpart for Russell, the splendidly crisp Jess Stacy. These performances – spiky, wayward, Quixotic, alternately disconsolate and chortling in mood – contain the essence of Pee Wee.

In his second period, he made a wonderful appearance in the TV programme *The Sound Of Jazz*, playing a duet with Jimmy Giuffrè that might be the best clarinet dialogue in jazz; he also produced a faultless album, *Swingin' With Pee Wee*, with Buck Clayton and Tommy Flanagan, and an even finer one with Hawkins, Bob Brookmeyer and Jo Jones in 1961. This, named *Jazz Reason*, was one of the series of perfectly thought-out sessions Nat Hentoff put together for Candid, and it is entirely magnificent. By that stage, Hawkins was playing with a degree of force that is simply awe-inspiring – as if he were uprooting each phrase from the earth and hurling it at the listener. In reaction, Pee Wee becomes more inconsequential and diaphanous-sounding than ever, and from the strange contest of opposites that results he emerges, if anything, the victor. Towards the end of the book *Hear Me Talkin' To Ya*, there is a quotation in which Pee Wee attempts a definition of jazz. "I'm not sure that this will do it", he equivocated, "but in a way it comes down to this – a certain group of guys – I don't care where they come from – have a heart feeling and a rhythm in their systems that you couldn't budge, a rhythm that you couldn't take away from them even if they were in a symphony orchestra. . . . These are men whose way of playing you couldn't alter no matter where you put them or what you tried to teach them." He must have been thinking of himself. ●

the charts

Every month on this page, a selection of **informative, contentious and plain opinionated** statistics from the

extraordinary orbit of the world's jazz and new music magazine. Why not send us **your own current playlist?**

ten great hendrix

guitar solos

1. Bold As Love

Axis: Bold As Love

2. Fire

Are You Experienced

3. 1983 (A Woman I Shall Turn To Be)

Electric Ladyland

4. Hey Joe

Single

5. Red House

In The West

6. Night Bird Flying

The Cry Of Love

7. All Along The Watch Tower

Electric Ladyland

8. Little Wing

Axis: Bold As Love

9. House Burning Down

Electric Ladyland



10. Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)

Electric Ladyland

Compiled on a rainy day by dreamy Phil

McNell.

top selling jazz cds

1. Birth Of The Cool

Miles Davis (Capitol)

2. The Bebop Revolution

Dizzy Gillespie (RCA Bluebird)

3. Gotham City Jazz

Bobby Hackett (Doornhouse)

4. Tenor Shoes

Scott Hamilton (Concord)

5. Go Girl!

Triaxxonal Soul Champs (Diamond)

6. Plays Jobim

Ebene Elton (Blue Note)

7. Volition

Ralph Peterson Qet (Blue Note)

8. Solos, Duets & Trios

Duke Ellington (RCA Bluebird)

9. Spotlight On Lucille

B B King (Ace)

10. Sing Monk

Garnett Moore (Novus)

Compiled by Dave Skinner, Harvey's

Records, 22 High St, Chatham.

jazz down under

1. Horn

Dale Barlow (Spiral Scratch)

2. Time On My Hands

John Scofield (Blue Note)



3. Stolen Moments

Lee Ritenour (GRP)

4. The Widow In The Window

Kenny Wheeler (ECM)

5. Naked City

Naked City (Newavuch)

6. Crazy People Music

Braeford Marialis (CBS)

7. On Broadway Vol 2

Paul Motian (JMT)

8. My Way

Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy (DIW)

9. Blue Shift

Clarim Fructus Zone (ABC)

10. Sex

Nicki (Spiral Scratch)

Australian jazz-sellers chart courtesy of

Kimber Stafford, Anthem Records, 313

Kent St, Sydney

reader's playlist

1. Paris Concert

Credé (ECM)

2. Six Compositions (Quartet) 1984

Anthony Braxton (Black Saint)

3. Triplicate

Dave Holland Trio (ECM)

4. Dream Weaver

Charles Lloyd (Atlantic)

5. Fish Out Of Water

Charles Lloyd (ECM)



6. The Golden Number

Charles Haden (A&M)

7. Introductions In The Dark

Andy Sheppard (Antilles)

8. The Village Vanguard Sessions

Bill Evans (Milestone)

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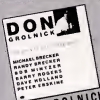
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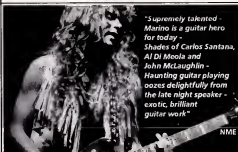
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Per up! GERRY HEMINGWAY gets on the beat with Gang
Grease and Franz Kufmann. Photo by GERT DERUYTER



In your sizzling September Soundcheck Cecil goes fluorescent,

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FRANZ KOGLMANN

A WHITE LINE
hat ART 6048 CD

A White Line, April In Vienna, Eccezzante Shorty, Quapp, Festive Manor, The Fable Of Mabel, Bley Play, Jamhangle, Oaf, Aristovoy, For Max, Out Of Nowhere, Free (Three) Again I-Hi, Je?, At The Jazz Band Ball, Franz Koglmann (t, flhn); Mario Arcari (sbb); Tony Coe (t, ts); Jean-Christophe Mouton (flhn); Raoul Herger (sba); Paul Bley (p); Helmut Federle (acc); Burkhard Stangl (g); Klaus Koch (b); Gerry Hemingway (d). Rec: October 1989.

WERNER UFFLINGER has introduced some less than extraordinary talents to the studios, but Franz Koglmann is one of his happiest discoveries. Or, rather, one of his most interesting: 'happy' is hardly the right word for the Austrian bass player's philosophy of "precision of melancholy". His three previous records for hat Art (*Job, About Yesterday's Eccezzante and Orte Der Gesmetrie*) have enacted a persuasive case for his aim to impose a European severity on a jazzman's *modus operandi*. With his stringently detailed charts and sparse, bleak sonorities, Koglmann's 'jazz' credentials probably need checking in the first place. At least he makes his position clear in the sleeve-note: "I have a greater affinity for the expressions of a melancholic decadence than the spontaneous joy of improvising."

This note is nearly his undoing, since it makes a spurious case for the segregation of jazz into white cool (Miles excepted) and 'swing, soul and heated expressivity', attributed to black players. Readers of these pages will scarcely need to be told of such lawbreakers as Anthony Braxton, Art Pepper, Buddy Collette, Andrew Hill, George Russell and the many others who flout Koglmann's daft stratifications. Better to turn to the music which, ideology aside, is a fascinating programme of originals and plums picked from the jazz past.

Except Koglmann is, for once, just a little too stilted and even weary in his execution of the project. The scintillating refinements of *Orte Der Gesmetrie* are traded too often for a merely forlorn series of gestures. The lack of a purposeful rhythmic base - Hemingway plays on only a few of the tracks - tends to allow some of the pieces to lose coherence, and even Koglmann's own playing (at his best he sounds like the pale, unsmiling ghost of Beiderbecke) seems below par. "April In Vienna", a feature for him, droops rather than drifts.

Some of the arrangements don't do anything

for the themes, either. Dick Twardzik's "Fable Of Mabel" (maybe "The Girl From Greenland" would have been a better choice) lacks the composer's winsome brio, and "Festive Manor" turns Mulligan into a spiritless bore. But there are some intriguing things, enough to keep faith in Koglmann's strange doctrine. Gil Evans's "Jamhangle" becomes a magical trio for tenor, trumpet and tuba; the originals "Quapp" and "Out" are mysterious, fragmented journeys; and the "White Line" medley of Stan Kenton themes is ingeniously conceived and realised.

Bley is a little too subliminal but Coe has a few delightful solos, while the repository case of Arcari, Stangl, Koch and Herger know the leader's music best, and serve it best. They finish on "Jazz Band Ball" and sound like a stripped-down version of Miff Mole's Molars

FRANZ KOGLMANN

A WHITE LINE



rather than the ODJB. He's a queer one, alright.

RICHARD COOK

COURTNEY PINE

GET BUSY
Mango 1046 CD/MC/LP

Get Busy, Blue Tide, I Don't Care, Moving On, Be Mine Tonight, I'm Still Waiting, Closer To Home, Never Be Lonely, In Time, Interlude
Pine (ts, ss), Ian Fraser (sbb), Robbie Lynn (ky), Cameron Pierre (g), Danny Browne, Delroy Donaldson (b); Clewie (d, perc); Carroll Thompson, Pam Hall (v).

THE FLUCTUATING fortunes of reggae over the last decade or so have been extreme to say the least. The death of Bob Marley on the brink of pan-global success in 1980 was the body blow the music didn't need. From the mainstream's

point of view it's taken ten years to pick itself up off the canvas. In between, a period of rank artistic straits all but obliterated the music's commercial, non-Jamaican audience. Now its influence is felt in all areas of black music, from soul and hip hop to Africa and Latin America. All of which makes Courtney Pine's decision to choose this moment to release a record that is reggae with slight jazz overtones (rather than vice versa) look like an apposite piece of timing.

With the exception of "I'm Still Waiting", a rather insipid cover of the old Diana Ross song that carries an Aswad production credit, all the tracks on *Get Busy* were written and recorded at the Kingston Music Works studios of fabled Jamaican dancehall pioneer Gussie Clarke. Mr Clarke, through his work with Dennis Brown, Gregory Isaacs and a host of other, lesser-known singers, is one of the most accomplished writers, arrangers and producers currently working in Jamaican music. He seems to have lacked inspiration for his role in this particular project, however.

Most of the tracks are variations on a small handful of mid-tempo rhythms and arrangements, combining recent advances in JA music technology with a bland soul-reggae fusion in the style of Maxi Priest. The bulk of them are instrumental, which means Courtney gets to blow a lot of sax throughout. Unfortunately, his tone has been rounded right down by Clarke to fit the thin, digital sound of the backing tracks; his solos come across as nothing more than minor embellishments to the record's various themes.

Don't misunderstand me. I respect what Courtney is trying to do with a record such as this - acknowledging personal roots, attempting to open his music up to its natural audience - and certainly it's in keeping with the spirit of his work with Mica Paris, The Pet Shop Boys, Soul II Soul and the groove-based material on his *Songs From Our Underground* EP. But isn't *Get Busy* absolutely typical of the kind of music he was trying to escape from when he started playing jazz in the first place?

Listen, but don't expect to hear much.

TONY HERRINGTON

STAN GETZ

ANNIVERSARY
Emarcy 838 769 CD/MC/LP

El Cabon, I Can't Get Started, Sails By Starlight, Stay's Blue, I Thought About You, What Is This Thing



Called Love, Blood Count.

Stan Getz (ts); Kenny Barron (p); Rufus Reid (b); Victor Lewis (d). Rec: 6 July 1987.

BILLY HIGHTSTREET SAMBA
Emarcy 838 771 CD/MC/LP

Hopalong Creek; Anytime Tomorrow; Be There There; Billy Hightstreet Samba; The Derge; Page Two; Body And Soul; Tuesday Next.

Stan Getz (ts, ss); Chuck Loeb (g); Mitchel Forman (ky); Mark Egan (b); Victor Lewis (d); Bobby Thomas Jr (perc). Rec: 4 November 1981.

STAN GETZ doesn't play like Sonny Rollins, but both of these saxophone masters have much in common – they've both been through the mill, come out the other side, and know how to pace the show: never less than decently good, they keep themselves in reserve to an extent yet every once in a while they'll heat you up and offer something that makes you go dizzy even thinking about it. And they're both killers on that old familiar song-form.

Billy Hightstreet Samba offers the larger group – guitar and percussion and a lot of original material, most of it Latin-infected if not entirely Latin-based. The title track is a jolly romp, written by Chuck Loeb, as are four of the other tracks, and "Anytime Tomorrow" is superbly dreamy. The one standard, "Body And Soul", is notable for the way that Getz refuses to compete directly with any of the test-piece baggage that the song carries by not directly playing the melody or even completing the first chorus, then establishes his authority with a re-entry that's very nearly as casually forbidding and chillingly pretty as that classic outburst on Herman's "Early Autumn".

This sort of magisterial economy, emotion refined by intellect, is fully restated on the later *Anniversary* disc, when he drifts into "I Can't Get Started" on the middle-eight then gets into the sort of analysis that forces you to acknowledge that this one's got to be put alongside Paul Bley's and Mingus's explorations of this extraordinary song. And *then* come the rapturous melodic extensions of "Seella By Starlight" . . . Barron works hard, and he's good, but he's very much the junior partner in the face of this absolute command of material. Drummer Lewis and bassist Reid are faced with getting on with it at four-to-a-bar and both respond like they want to die for their leader.

Get the CD if you can: it's got over 20 more

minutes of this glorious event on it. And while we're at it – will whoever controls the Granz archive have another listen to that great Getz *At The Shrine* concert? Not to mention the Opera House set with J J Johnson? Well, I only ask . . .

JACK COOKE

CECIL TAYLOR
IN FLORESCENCE
A&M 5286 CD/MC/LP

J.; Pethes Visiting The Abyss; Santa, For Steve McCall; In Florescence; Ell Moving Track; Streets 113; Anas In Crisis Mouthful Of Fresh Cut Flowers; Charlie And The, Entitled; Leaf Taken Home; Chai Chouachou; Goddess Of Green Floating Waters; Morning Of Departure; Fog Shai.

Taylor (p, v); William Parker (b, v, perc); Gregg Bendian (perc, v). Rec: 8 June, 9 September 1989.



A LAUNDRY, very feline Cecil Taylor eyes potential listeners carefully from the album cover, long greying dreadlocks falling casually over a colourful jump-suit top. But those listeners are responding at last, and suddenly at 60 he's in the news. A recent special supplement to *Village Voice* was devoted exclusively to his music, with contributions from European and American critics. Following the much-praised marathon 13 CD set *In Berlin* from EMP, *In Florescence* is his first album on a US label for more than a decade.

Free jazz is on the defensive – as Stuart Nicholson notes (*Wire* 78) Rivers, Sanders, Murray, Bowie and Shepp have all "jumped ship". But Cecil's was always a special kind of "free jazz". As he mellows a little, becoming more melodic and sometimes lyrical, this becomes evident (no question of him "jumping

ship" though). Recordings over the last decade or so have revealed Taylor motifs or even themes – harmonic progressions and textural juxtapositions common to his compositions/improvisations. A familiar plangent chromatic figure pervades "Leaf Taken Home", for instance; common textures generate "Pethro", one of Cecil's great thrashing, churning improvisations (comparison with two passages on *Unit Structures* bears out these observations). His music has become that critical bit more unified and accessible.

"I currently view the presentation of music from a very ritualistic point of view," Cecil explains. Hence the vocalising, chanting and poetry prominent here – vocal introductions to the tracks (added later), plus "Morning Of Departure", a poem in Cecil's stream-of-consciousness style. This ought not to be a problem for his audience – provided the ritual does remain a frame for the music. On this album (though not always on others) Cecil accompanied is Cecil complemented, not diluted. Only on "Ell Moving Track" is he completely solo. Elsewhere, regular bassist William Parker and new percussionist Gregg Bendian march the leader's violence, lyncism and surprise with their own.

Cecil asks a lot of new sidemen. "They're not going to get paid very much, so the point is going to have to be in the playing." If they survive, he teaches them how the music "can strengthen your resolve in a materialistic world". The pianist's project is very long-term; it requires an heroic defiance of that world, involving sacrifices you and I are unlikely to comprehend. *In Florescence* is a triumphant vindication and consummation of that project. It reaffirms Cecil Taylor's place at the head of those dedicated to keeping jazz out of the museum.

ANDY HAMILTON

TUBBY HAYES
FOR MEMBERS ONLY
Miles Music MM079 LP

Dear Johnny B, Finky Minky; This Is All I Ask; For Members Only; Dolphin Dance; You Know I Care; Mexican Green.

Tubby Hayes (ts, f); Mick Pyne (p); Ron Mathewson (b); Tony Levin (d). Rec: 25 January, 7 August, 11 October 1967.

THIS is another welcome release from John Miles, and one to serve as a reminder, for those



who need it, that there was much excellent British modern jazz around before 1985.

Whilst Tubbs may not have been the innovator that his near-contemporary Joe Harriott was, he played with a fire and commitment that earned him respect from all quarters and work with the likes of Clark Terry and Roland Kirk; on one remarkable occasion Duke Ellington asked him to deputise for Paul Gonsalves at a few minutes' notice.

This is the quartet that recorded the *Mexican Green* album for Foncane and showed Tubbs taking the first steps in the direction of a freer, post-hard-bop style. He disguises the rules rather than breaking or ignoring them, though apart from "Mexican Green" and some delightfully uncouth solos from Tony Levin, the music is still firmly rooted in bop. Even on "Green" the outside elements are used as climactic devices rather than being fundamental to the improvisational procedures. It's the conviction, rather than the risks or the technique, that impresses. Hard drummers with fast bands full of young chord-cyclists may think they're where bop is at, but saying don't make it so.

Mathewson's sensitive, dependable and inventive playing was already putting him on the road to being a pillar of the London jazz establishment. Pyne's and Levin's work, especially on the accompaniments for the faster pieces, show how Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams had already influenced the modern rhythm section orthodoxy, and the oft-maligned British rhythm section was no longer legitimately the butt of jibes from frustrated American visitors.

I'm lucky to have a tape of the whole of the January session (broadcast one day after my birthday and two days after Tubby's - a bit of human interest there) and I'm not sure that the track details on the sleeve are correct; I've not had time to compare details, but "Johnny B" seems to be from the January rather than the October session. Anyway, the material not included here was of a similar high standard - any chance of *For Members Only Volume 2*?

BARRY WITHERDEN

EDWARD VESALA SOUND AND FURY ODE TO THE DEATH OF JAZZ

ECM 1413 CD/MC/LP
Sylvan Swizzle, Infinite Express, Time To Think, Winds Of Sahara, Watching For The Signal, A Glimmer Of

Sepal, Mop Mop, What? Where? Hum Hum.
Matti Tulkonen (t), Jorma Tapio (as, bel, b), Jouko Kestronen (ss, fl), Pepe Palvinen (as, ts, ss, fl, cl, bcl), Tim Fincken (mrm, tub bell), Tuomo Vainio (sax), Iiro Hietala (p, harp, ky), Jarmo Sumen (g), Ulfir Krokfors (b); Edward Vesala (d). Rec. April, May 1989.

FINNISH DRUMMER Edward Vesala remains arguably the most original voice in contemporary European jazz, even if he would refuse any such label. Despite great financial difficulties, Vesala has put together the superb Sound And Fury big band in a way which recalls the Sun Ra Arkestra, working constantly in the leader's studio on developing a vision.

Ode To The Death Of Jazz stands alongside his previous release, the justly acclaimed *Lama*, as superb examples of that devoted effort. The band sound tighter and more together this

EDWARD VESALA



time around, but Vesala's music remains as surprising and unpredictable. There is no suggestion of the kind of rigidifying of either ideas or execution which constant playing together can bring.

Despite the title, this is not a programmatic set. Steve Lake, who seems to have set up a cottage industry writing ECM sleeve-notes, suggests in his thoughtful essay that the programmatic element falls into the concluding track, "What? Where? Hum Hum" ("title suggesting a man scanning the horizon for jazz revivals"), with its opening blues-laced march sequence suddenly switching tracks (and bridging jazz history) into a Coleman-esque flurry. Vesala, he dutifully records, disagrees, but I don't think Steve is far from the mark.

The set switches modes and idioms cohesively in just that way. The brooding, intro-

spective, delicately interwoven textures of "Sylvan Swizzle", "Time To Think" or "Watching For The Signal" (each punctuated with assertive, darting stabs from the horns, especially altoist Jorma Tapio, whose tone and approach does owe something to Ornette) represent one pole, the invigorating but highly flexible rhythmic power and raging polyphonic lines of "Winds Of Sahara" or "Infinite Express" quite another.

"A Glimmer Of Sepal" is a further venture into Tango (an unlikely form, but one which Vesala has visited before), played with a perfectly straight face and no discernible trace of parody, while "Mop Mop" draws more centrally on electronics in creating its complex patterns behind the searching saxophone lines. Another great record from an artist whose critical stock remains sky-high, but who deserves to be much more widely heard.

KENNY MATHESON

HILTON RUIZ DOIN' IT RIGHT

RCA Novus PL83085 CD/MC/LP

Doin' It Right, Slip Slidin' Blues, Stille By Starlight, Shades Of Thelma, Missy Moods, Scottish Blues, I Didn't Know What Time It Was, The Blessing, Den Cherry (t); Ruiz (p); Jimmy Rowser, Ruben Rodriguez (b); Steve Berrios (d, perc); Daniel Ponce (gtr, bjo). Rec: November 1989.

MICHEL CAMILO ON THE OTHER HAND

Epic 466937 CD/MC/LP

On The Other Hand, City Of Angels, Journey, Impressions, Silent Talk 1, Forbidden Fruit, Suite Sandrine Pt 3, Bird's Works, Silent Talk 2. Michel Phillip Moussman (t), Ralph Bowen, Chris Hunter (s); Camillo (p); Michael Bowie (b); Cliff Almond (d); Sammy Figueroa (perc); D K Dyson (v). Rec: no details.

ELAINE ELIAS PLAYS JOBBIM

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Waters Of March/Aqua De Bole; Sahar, Passarim, Don't Ever Go Away, Desafinados, Angola, Children's Games; Dymid, Zingaro; One Note Samba, Don't Ever Go Away (med). Elias (p, v), Eddie Gomez (b), Jack DeJohnette (d); Nana Vasconcelos (perc). Rec. December 1989.

THREE VARIATIONS on the Latin Jazz equation.

On the strength of his previous recordings I'd always thought of Hilton Ruiz as being in



the modal tradition of McCoy Tyner, Eddie Palmieri and Papa Lucena. Perhaps my critical faculties were being deflected by romantic notions. Here the most obvious template for such ballad performances as "Seella By Starlight" and "Misty Moods", with their rippling left and right hand chords, sudden downward spiralling arpeggio runs and long upper register flights, is Bud Powell. On "The Blessing" it's Bud again with some Billy Taylor at the fringes. On the title track it's Horace Silver. On "Shades Of Thelonious" it's . . .

Perhaps this is Hilton's stab at a bebop album. It's certainly a long way from the pristine fusion of *El Camino* and *Strat*. Daniel Ponce's congas give a vaguely Nuyorican air to two of the tracks and Don Cherry blows some frangible, muted trumpet across a couple of others. The main action comes from Ruiz, however. On the up tempo cuts his long improvisations accumulate a bounding complexity and he creates an absorbing fantasy out of very familiar changes on "I Didn't Know . . .". Highly recommended.

As is Michel Camilo's new release, albeit for rather different reasons. Like Ruiz, Camilo's pianistic abilities go beyond prodigious. Phenomenal would be more appropriate. His solos can feel like physical assaults to the body, block chords sledge-hammered out, right hand runs that explode off the keyboard right in to the ear. Naturally he can play soft as well and *On The Other Hand* has its fair share of the kind of meandering, impressionist ballads that all fusion pianists deal in as a matter of course. Its main currency, however, is contemporaneity fusion with a pan-Caribbean perspective, particularly the title track, "Journey" and the 'ambitious' extended composition "Suite Sardinia Part 3". Of course I love D K Dyson's vocal on "Forbidden Fruit", an old style, slow burn Latin/disco number in the mould of Pati Labellé's "Teach Me Tonight", but "Impressions", a hand-hitting, percussive samba, is the track that really sends me overboard. What a fantastic tune! If this doesn't become a certified jazz dance classic over the next few months then someone isn't listening to the right records.

Back to less physical pleasures and the new Elaine Elias album, a collection of the water-thin bossa novas of Brazilian composer Anton Carlos Jobim. You have the choice of two directions when dealing with material as slight and cloying as this, the exotic or the kitsch. To

her credit Elias avoids both those dead ends by transposing all the tracks to straight jazz signatures, letting Jack DeJohnette loose at the drums and, on the ballads, deploying Eddie Gomez's lyrical bass as a frontline instrument. Elias's piano can cut up rough too and her solos on "Agua De Bebe" and "Passarim" contain some very spiky edges. All this results in some fairly spring-heeled renditions of otherwise unremarkable material, "Desafinado" and "One Note Samba", for instance.

Had Elias chosen to interpret all these songs vocally as well as instrumentally, however, I would have liked them even more. She sings on just one track here. "Don't Ever Go Away", a trembling, melismatic performance that brings the set to a close in a place of mellifluous quietude.

TONY HERRINGTON



CAROL KIDD
THE NIGHT WE CALLED IT A DAY
 Linn AKH 007 CD/MC/LP
*How Little We Know; Where Go When, I Fall In Love
 Too Easily; I Loved Him; The Night We Called It A
 Day; Where Are You; The Glory Of Love; I Could Have
 Told You So; I Think It's Gonna Rain Today; Gloomy
 Sunday*
 Carol Kidd (v); David Newton (p); David Green (b);
 Alan Ganley (d). Rec: 12-13 February 1990.

ADVANCE ENTHUSIASM for Ms Kidd's new record (*Wire 77*) is convincingly justified by the music. This is a courageous and compelling recital. The tempos scarcely ever rise above a sleepy pace – only "Where Are You", of all things, perks up – and the sound balance exposes the singer's voice without a shred of mercy. She turns this unpromising brief into a low-key triumph.

Her interpretations suggest a rather modestly-proportioned voice that can sound, curiously, either very young or very mature, with a rapid vibrato. Sometimes, when she's singing particularly softly, Kidd flirts with a tremolo that could be called too sentimental. It doesn't trouble me – well, these are sentimental songs – but it could put off listeners who prefer the more ironic manner of younger performers. It might be why a couple of tunes misfire, too. She doesn't really get hold of Randy Newman's "I Think It's Gonna Rain Today", which is a sour loser's song, and her alteration of the lyrics suggests that she hasn't figured that out. Nor is the hopeless kiesel of Gordon Jenkins's lyric for "I Loved Him" ("He was Boston, I was Vegas/He was crepe Suzette, I was pie") rendered believable.

Most of the others are bewitching. "The Night", "I Fall In Love" and "How Little We Know" will suggest to anyone hearing these songs for the first time that this is the only way they could be sung. Kidd's scrupulous enunciation and phrasing have an old-fashioned correctness about them, and because the tempos are so measured, there's not a lot of scope for rushes and retards anyway. What she searches for is a dynamic where tiny variations of stress in the line carry their own cargo of interpretative effect. On the closing "Gloomy Sunday", which she sings on her own, this technique packs an especially emotional punch.

If the record is a little one-paced, and best taken a side at a time, Carol's accompanists create attentive variations from track to track. Green and Ganley are obliged to do little more than behave themselves, but Newton contributes some suitably pensive solos that match the singer's restraint. If you're tired of much-touted new singers whose records don't add up to more than a vague sense of promise, turn instead to Carol Kidd.

RICHARD COOK

JAMES 'BLOOD' ULMER
REVEALING
In & Out 7007 CD/LP
Revealing, Raw Groove, Overtime, Love Nat.
 George Adams (s); Ulmer (g); Cecil McBee (b);
 Doug Hammond (d). Rec: 1977.

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Wire: July 1990

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first album under his own name. The music it contains is remarkable for making only the most peripheral references to any of the guitarist's previous musical experiences, with Hank Marr, Larry Young, Joe Henderson, Ornette Coleman, et al. Nor does it sound much like any of his subsequent recordings, with the possible exception of Phalanx's *In Touch*. Whether this draws you in or turns you off I wouldn't know. I do know this however — *Revealing* is a great record.

Over the years Ulmer has most often been referred to as a blues guitarist. At this stage of his career, at least on *Revealing*'s evidence, such a judgement carries less weight than it would later on. His solos on the title track, "Raw Groove" and "Overtime" are chips off the same block: no bent or held notes, no yearning blue accents, but space, discontinuity, fragmentation; muted chords dropped all round the beat; pinched phrases that ring bell-like or fall dead on the ear; a classically pure tone that connects back to the sophistication of players like Kenny Burrell and Grant Green.

These performances, low-key but with an acute sense for the dynamics of music, are paralleled by the playing of McBee and Hammond, who combine in a fleeting, skidding pulse, so understated that sometimes it's barely there at all. In such a context George Adams's tenor should sound monumentally garrulous, but all the music seems to stem from the same thinking and the emotive content of his solos on "Revealing" and "Overtime" are tempered by the air of pitiless concentration that runs throughout the record.

Ulmer's next release after *Revealing* would be *Tale Of Captain Black*. For better or worse it was that record and its barely controlled absorption of elements from harmonies, blues and rock that laid the foundation for much of his later music. *Revealing* hints at what might have happened had the guitarist adhered to a more specific, but no less ambitious, vision for his art over the next 13 years.

TONY HERRINGTON

LESTER BOWIE'S BRASS FANTASY

DIW Records DIW-835 CD/LP

Quincy, Who Says, After Thought, My Way, I Got You, Honky Tonk
Bowie (t, flhn), Stanton Davis (s, pcc), E.J. Allen (t), Genid Brouil (t), Steve Turt (b, conch shells), Frank Lay (tb, v), Gregory Williams (trb), Bob Stewart (rba), Yannie Johnson (d), Farnoudou Dou

Moye (perc); plus Earl Garner (t), track 2, Ken Crutchfield (d), track 5. Rec: January 1990.

BOWIE'S DECLARED intention with *Brass Fantasy* was for a project "to show things you wouldn't normally associate with a trumpet". He's long since broken that ground, and the exuberance with which his all-brass ensemble could funk has since spawned at least one imitator in the form of Microgroove.

On this Japanese release he's not breaking any new ground. It's the usual mix of classics (Bill Doggett's "Honky Tonk"), a bit of funk (James Brown's "I Got You"), a bit of kitsch ("My Way") plus three charts by erstwhile Brass Fantasia Bruce Purse. I fear the imagination may have waned in Bowie's selection of material. However, there is evidence here that it hasn't waned in his playing of it.

DIW



Though the first three tracks — Purse's — are skillfully executed, they tell me nothing I didn't know about the joyful combination that brass can be. It's when Bowie is let loose on "My Way" that the recording comes alive. He said in a 1987 *Wire* interview: "We want people to go through a range of emotions. I don't like an audience that just sits there, listening so seriously, no one smiles." On "My Way" he proves himself once more the master manipulator of emotions.

It would be so easy to send up the overblown sentiment of the song, with all its Vegas associations. But, after a suckly sweet intro, Bowie delivers the tune in the sweetest, caring tone — sincerity itself. What's unnerving is the occasional hint that it could descend into farce at any minute; a teasing snatch of his brassy, mocking tone appears, only to be

instantly reined in — all sincerity again. As the track builds, it does eventually descend into the big, high-kicking Sinatra treatment, and the shortened drum solos are pure pastiche. But just as you brace yourself for the 100 decibel finale, it reverts to the celestial plane and ends with the ring of a triangle. It's hard to tell whether it's sublime comedy or just ridiculous.

But this is all so easy for Bowie now, as is the joyful funk of "I Got You". Is it possible that he's bored with his own cleverness? For a musician capable of such breadth, and supported by such able sidemen — his Art Ensemble Of Chicago sidekick Moye is wasted here — you can't help feeling he is capable of expanding the field still further rather than digging this well worn groove.

VERONICA LYONS

BOB BERG

IN THE SHADOWS
Denon CY-76210 CD

In The Shadows; The Crossing; I Thought About You; Either Or, Stay That Way, Carry On, Games, Autumn Leaves

Berg (tx); Mike Stern (g); Jim Beard (ky), Lincoln Goines (bj); Dennis Chambers (d), plus Will Lee (b) tracks 4-6; Randy Brecker (t) track 1. Rec: no details

BOTH BERG and regular partner Mike Stern are far better musicians than ever their tenure with Miles Davis suggested. Which is an indictment of where Davis is these days rather than a reflection on his two former sidemen. Once an enabler, he now seems to render his players anonymous in a stodgy fusion soup. The extent to which he is short-changing his audience becomes all too apparent in the post-Davis work of John Scofield and the collaborations between Bob Berg and Mike Stern, which are far more interesting fare than the aimless electronic rambling of their former boss.

This is the sixth collaboration between Berg and Stern, the third under Berg's leadership. As with their previous work, albums under Stern's name have a prominent role for guitar while those under Berg's feature it less. For recording purposes this nominally differentiates the two players' work, which to all intents and purposes shares a common vision, as is clear in live performance when repertoire from Stern's and Berg's albums are featured equally.

In The Shadows is the best of Berg's outings



under his own name, *Short Stories* was uncensored while *Cycles* suffered from companions, however odious, with the almost simultaneous release of Mike Brecker's *Don't Try This At Home*. Here, however, the powerful Berg tone that was honed in the hard-bop ensembles of Horace Silver and Cedar Walton seems more at home, confident in his role as leader. The title track is a Miles-by-proxy composition and, as with John Scofield's *Blue Matter*, you are left with the *spirit* of Davis yet something far more memorable than anything the ex-Prince Of Darkness has had on offer in recent years. Randy Brecker is drafted in for harmon-muted laments, suitably *a la mode*, in a muscular, without being muscle-bound, opener.

"The Crossing" is sophisticated and jaunty, a vehicle showing off Berg's accomplished saxophone technique; "Either Or", a Stern composition, suggests the strong, interlocking unison lines that are a hallmark of his own albums on Atlantic. Berg's composition "Games", digging in around the interval of a fourth, shows Berg-as-inventive-technician and Stern as a sophisticated guitarist.

"Autumn Leaves", the best cut on the album, suggests that they are capable of reaching for a deeper seriousness than much of their work together has so far achieved. Ultimately, their high-tech quick-fixes are often glossily superficial and raise questions of their artistic direction. Recently Berg showed his post-bop class on *Live At Sweet Basil* (Sonet) with Randy Brecker, and Stern, a couple of years ago, revealed on Harvie Swartz's *Urban Earib* and *Smart Moves* (both Gramavision) that he could be a player of discretion and genuine invention. At the moment their brand of look-Ma-no-hands jazz is comfortably behind the lines of battle at the creative cutting edge and this is the problem - Berg and Stern are capable of much more.

STUART NICHOLSON

KENNY WHEELER QUINTET THE WIDOW IN THE WINDOW ECM 1417 CD/MC/LP

Aspire, Ma Belle Helene, The Widow In The Window; Ana, Hotel Le Hat, New, And Now Again
Kenny Wheeler (fltn, c), John Abercrombie (g), John Taylor (p), Dave Holland (b), Peter Erskine (d).
Rec: February 1990.

THE GUILDHALL JAZZ BAND WITH KENNY WHEELER

WALK SOFTLY

Wave 32 CD

Kayak; Walk Softly, The Widow In The Window, Little Suite; Who Am You, Know Where, Know How

Kenny Wheeler (fltn, c), Guildhall Jazz Band. Rec: March 1987.

KENNY WHEELER resumes his association with Manfred Eicher and ECM with this subtle, reflective quintet set, his first for the label since *Double, Double You* in 1984. The band draws on old allies in the two Johns, Taylor and Abercrombie, plus bass maestro Dave Holland, while Peter Erskine fits in as if he had never played with anybody else.

As Seve Lake points out in his informative sleeve-note, Wheeler's music has a unique floating quality to it, one which marks it out from almost anyone else currently working in

stroke. "Ana" is a stripped down version of an orchestral suite composed for Alex Slippenbach's Berlin Contemporary Jazz Orchestra, parted to a delicate, brooding meditation, while "Hotel Le Hat" lifts both the tempo and the mood. This is a set which takes a little time to register fully, but will stand up to a lot of listening.

Wheeler's beguiling gift for oblique melodies and unexpected harmonies is evident again in the Wave release with Scott Stromman's Guildhall Jazz Band, 1987 vintage. Four of the six tunes are his (although not the very Wheelerishly titled "Know Where, Know How", written by saxophonist Malcolm Miles), including a version of "The Widow In The Window" which is lush and more overtly dramatic than the understated quintet reworking.

The Guildhall band play to a very high standard. Wheeler's work with big bands is badly documented on record, and this is an excellent taster for an even more mouth-watering prospect, the forthcoming ECM live recording of his own big band, built around the core of the present quintet, which toured earlier this year.

KENNY MATHIESON



MICKEY TUCKER QUARTET

BLUES IN FIVE DIMENSIONS

SteepleChase SC 31258 CD/MC/LP

Nice's Dream, Grand Ma, Petit Ma, A Nice Clean Machine For Pedro, Synops H-Jane 'N' Boogie, Blast In Five Dimensions; Bushman

Mickey Tucker (p), Ted Dunbar (g), Rufus Reid (b), David Jones (d). Rec: June 1989.

PIANO AND guitar is a combination that has never failed, for me, ever since *Undercurrent* and *Intermodalities*. There's something about those two clean lines of attack, the possibilities for counterpoint and harmonic play-off, which is perpetually arresting, and with two intelligent, vigorous players like Tucker and Dunbar on board, there's nothing much that can go wrong.

If there's anything disappointing about this record, it's that it doesn't provide a showcase for Tucker's writing, which has always been of a high standard. He's been producing some longer, classically-leaning pieces of late, and perhaps this has left him with less time to work on tunes: all he contributes here is the

jazz. The frantic scurry of so much current music is ignored in this set, in favour of a beautiful and intricate series of extended reflections which, even in the most up-tempo moments, are never rushed.

That is not to say that the music lacks either dynamism or energy. Wheeler is often introspective, always lyrical, and usually bittersweet, but he never falls into the merely pastoral or ethereal. The music is bound together by an inner tension which communicates itself quite palpably to the listener, a testament to the ratified level on which each of these musicians executes their art.

The trumpeter's fondness for allusive titles and puns is evident again in these compositions. "Aspire", taut and defiantly melancholy, is dedicated to saxophonist Roland Kirk's determination to continue playing after his



title track, which, as the name suggests, is not so much an original as a set of variations on that seemingly inexhaustible format. It provides a springboard for one of his most rhythmically inventive solos, all the same, and with Dunbar adding chords in the background Tucker is free to play some engaging tricks with his left hand, which is always coming in when you least expect it, usually to double up on a phrase and fill out the texture.

The quartet have a nice sense of dynamics, particularly on Dunbar's Afro-influenced "A Nice Clean Machine For Pedro", which is one of the most melodically complex of the tunes, structured around a series of small climaxes: it could easily have ended up contrived and fussy, but the players never give the sense of being anything other than relaxed, and Dunbar sounds particularly fluid and unconstrained as he cuts across the basic pulse. Perhaps the most fun, and certainly the point where they come closest to letting go, is Benny Golson's "Jam 'N' Boogie", although you'll need a CD to hear that one.

Occasionally the ambience can start to feel just a little too formal: the swapping of phrases on "Grand Ma, Petite Ma" — Dunbar playing fractionally out of time, Tucker faultlessly echoing him — is almost too perfect, too knowing. But part of the appeal of a record like this is to bask in the musicianship — and besides, it's a pleasure, these days, to hear people being so unfailingly polite to each other.

JONATHAN COE

ARDITTI STRING QUARTET

ARDITTI

Gramavision GV 79440 CD

Grosse Fuge (Beethoven), *Quartet No 3* (Nancarrow), *Quartet 1931* (Crawford-Seeger), *Cocoon* — A *Scattered Landscape* (Reynolds), *Tetra* (Xenakis), *Irvine* (Arditti), *David Allerman* (vni); Levine (vln), *Andrade* (vla), *Rohan de Suram* (clo). Rec. 1989.

KRONOS QUARTET

BLACK ANGELS

Elektra Nonesuch 7559-79242

CD/MC

Black Angels (Crumph), *Spem In Alium* (Tallis), *Doom*, *A Sigh* (Matta), *They Are There* (Ives), *Quartet No 8* (Shostakovich).

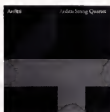
David Harrington, John Sherba (vni), Hariz Dour (vla), Jean-Jesensaud (clo). Rec: no details.

THESE TWO releases point up all too clearly the

disparities between the Arditti and Kronos quartets, despite similarities in the style of programming (there's actually more American music on the Arditti disc). *Black Angels* would have been called a concept album in the 1970s: the theme is darkness and oppression — Vietnam, the Israelites in Babylon, the ethnic Hungarians of Romania, the Second World War, and the quartet looking moody if perhaps not oppressed on the back cover.

The centrepiece, George Crumb's "Black Angels" itself, was probably the first piece specifically conceived (in 1970) for amplified quartet, and really doesn't need the special pleading of Kronos's additional gothic veils and flanging effects, which make a unique and unsettling work into a pastiche of hamfisted production trickery.

The impression left by the whole disc is of



barrel-scraping: Tallis's "Spem In Alium", arranged for ten multirecited quartets, and Kronos accompanying a 78 record of Charles Ives belting out one of his more blindly patriotic songs, are frankly pointless; Isran Matta's "Doom. A Sigh", with its tape of looting folk songs and cheap drum-machines, leaves the same sort of feeling as Sunday-supplement photojournalism (ie, no music), and Shostakovich doesn't benefit from the kind of unfocused and inexpressive performance (and production) he receives here. Kronos haven't always been like this; maybe it's the mind-numbing effect of acres of recent Terry Riley, but their standards have seriously dropped.

This couldn't be said about their more serious-minded London-based counterparts; their performances of Xenakis's "Tetra" had

reached triple figures by the time of the recording, and they play it with the understanding, sympathy and expressive commitment most quartets only manage (if at all) in the "major classics". Maybe it is one. On the other hand, their "Grosse Fuge" sounds more like Xenakis than most people's idea of Beethoven, which you may or may not find fascinating (I did). Otherwise, Ruth Crawford-Seeger's quartet is about as far "ahead of its time" as any music ever has been, though I'm not sure that its palindromes and numerical progressions offer much else, and Roger Reynolds's "Cocoon" (which apparently has nothing to do with Krazy Kat) comes over as a fairly disposable sequence of Modern String Techniques.

Nancarrow's quartet, the most successful non-player-piano piece I've heard from him, is (uncharacteristically) sensitive to tone-colour and idiomatic to the quartet medium. If you can call canons in four simultaneous tempi idiomatic, that is, and I can't imagine them being so to any but the Arditti Quartet. Naturally their chosen repertoire is generally more demanding on the listener as well as themselves, but the immediacy of their performances (vividly projected from the disc) is the product of a level of discipline and accomplishment the relative lack of which no amount of hype and packaging on Kronos's part can conceal.

RICHARD BARRETT

HANK CRAWFORD & JIMMY

MCGRIFF

ON THE BLUE SIDE

Milestone M9177 CD/MC/LP

Any Day Now, *Jimmy's Groove*, *The Glory Of Love*, *You're The One*, *Tuff*, *Jumpin' With Symphony Sid*, *Get Baby*, *Ain't I Good To You*, *Hank's Groove*.

Hank Crawford (as), Jimmy McGriff (org), Jimmy Powder (g), Vance James (d). Rec: 4 April, 9 August 1989.

RICHARD HOLMES & GENE AMMONS

GROOVIN' WITH JUG

Pacific Jazz 792930 CD/MC

Happy Blues, *Willow Weep For Me*, *Juggin' Around*, *Hitin' The Jug*, *Exactly Like You*, *Groovin' With Jug*, *Morn The Morn*, *Hey You*, *What's That?*

Gene Ammons (ss), Richard "Groove" Holmes (org), Gene Edwards (g), Leroy Henderson (d). Rec: 15 August 1961.

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JIMMY SMITH

COOL BLUES

Blue Note 84441 CD/MC

Groovin' At Small's; Dark Eyes; Cool Blues; A Night In Tunisia; What's New; Small's Minor; Once In A While Jimmy Smith (org), Lou Donaldson (sax), Eddie McFadden (g); Donald Bailey (d), Tina Brooks (ts, 1-4); Art Blakey (d, 1, 2, 4). Rec: 7 April 1958.

COOL BLUES is 74 minutes of Smith recorded live in 1958. Sound is thin but, as you would expect with Rudy Van Gelder, well-placed. Jimmy Smith's contract at Blue Note got him more illustrious accompanists than most organ players. Supplementing his usual trio are Art Blakey (three tracks) and Tina Brooks (four tracks, originally released as Blue Note LT-1054).

Tina Brooks was an intriguingly mobile tenor player who left few recordings before his premature death. His original shapes hang in the air like question marks. With Smith's organ chugging behind, though, the effect is curiously desolate. Lou Donaldson's sinuous, sexy alto also skates about unanchored: only Eddie McFadden's guitar seems to plug into the rhythm. Smith's organ lies like a muffler on the rhythm section. Even Art Blakey cannot really respond to the saxophones. The organ is not used for the high drama it is capable of: the usual Smith problem of overlong tracks, shapeless jams.

The Ammons/Holmes album documents a date that could not be finished in the studio, so most of it was recorded that night at the Black Orchid nightspot. It is a shame this is their one recording together: Ammons's ripe, earthy tenor fits Holmes's classic grits'n'gravy organ like a glove. Gene Edwards's savagely chopped rhythm playing predicts Blood Ullmer's back-to-Africa guitar. On "Willow Weep For Me" Ammons's sumptuous tenor is the definition of tenor balladry. This record has a rugged charm that burns undimmed through the decades.

The Crawford/McGriff album is a good example of how technology (courtesy the great Rudy Van Gelder again) can reinvent a genre: direct-to-two-track digital recording keeps the instruments glitteringly spacious, but the sound is still raw and whole.

Hank Crawford's timeless soulful alto and McGriff's Ellingtonian sense of orchestration have never sounded so good. Organ novices may find the Burt Bacharach opener hopelessly camp, but you only have to connect to Vance

James's deep blue, martial drums to hear it as riotously funky. On Lester Young's "Jumpin' With Symphony Sid" Crawford's grace and speed recall Bud Shank, of all people - his chops are stunning! It is a lesson in co-operation to hear James open up space for the organ with his cymbals.

"Hank's Groove" is sublime: the stereo separation! The pulse! Real soul jazz. Indulge.

BEN WATSON

MARTY FOGEL

MANY BOBBING HEADS, AT LAST
CMP 37 CD

Zavava; Guinea, Through The Storm, Owasco, Never Said Goodbye; Unlikely Bass Player; Land Of Giants; Lament; Cool It.

Marty Fogel (as, ts, cl), David Torn (g), Dean Johnson (b); Michael Shrieve (d). Rec: March 1989.



COMPPELLING, VISCERAL MUSIC. Fogel leads an impressive quartet: Torn doesn't get enough attention, but he was doing Frisell-style electro-scapes when all the interest was being directed at the Clark Kent of the guitar; Johnson gets a fat, rich sound that makes it hard to tell whether he's playing acoustic or fretless electric; and Shrieve is in charge of a wide range of styles, from blistering rock figures to delicate seaspray cymbals. Out front, Fogel himself is quite a versatile spic, mixing grand R&B licks with terse hard bop figures and a dash of timbral exploration.

The result is a record that is hard to bag but consistently startling and enjoyable. The slambag revision of Don Cherry's "Guinea" is deliciously executed, Torn dragging a virtual orchestra out of his effects pedals, while the tropical suggestiveness of "Zavava" and

"Owasco" creates a sense of the exotic without recourse to bowdlerised ideas of 'world music'. Fogel's squalling tone and Shrieve's pugilistic rhythms always ground the music in the physical; nothing drifts off, until perhaps the closing "Cool It".

The unsung hero of the session might be engineer Walter Quintus: he gets a hefty, physical sound which still soaks in the resonance that European studios have marked out for their own. Johnson, especially, is beautifully recorded. An outstanding set of, well, new fusion!

MIKE FISH

BARRE PHILLIPS

CAMOUFLAGE

VICTO 08 CD

Camouflage; Coverd; Twist And Parry; No Exclusion, You And Me, Around Again. Barre Phillips (b), and electronic tape on No Exclusion. Rec: May 1989.

TATSU AOKI

DEPRESSINGLY HAPPY
IEL 09190249 CD

Fly Dns, Building, Disorderly Conduct; Summer Is Coming But I Don't Want To Eat Its Cream Yet; Depressingly Happy, Never Mind, Just The Blues. Tatsu Aoki (b). Rec: July-November 1989.

I ALWAYS found the prospect of solo bass improvisation fairly daunting until I saw Barre Phillips at the 1987 Inca Festival. His use of space, modality and melody was also my first hint that improvised music doesn't necessarily have to be radical or 'difficult' all the time, it is allowed just to be beautiful too. I got *Call Me When You Get There* (ECM) which was beautiful as well - and I do wish someone hadn't pinched it - but distanced and subdued, not like the pale, gangly, stick-insect figure I'd watched hanging over his bass, gazing mysteriously into space as if inviting the whole audience to listen through his ears.

Camouflage is the real thing. It is an extraordinary recording, so intimate that you can hear Barre (and one of the audience) breathing, the microphones seem to be right inside the instrument; perfectly capturing the sonorities. Whether plucking, striking, rubbing or bowing the instrument like a sarangi, Phillips is phenomenally physical; his sound so *gravy* that you can actually hear his arms, hands and

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fingers spreading over, exploring and finding the instrument.

Unlike, for example, Barry Guy whose music demands heretofore technical extremes each time he plays, Phillips's technique seems to match his music perfectly, without any tension or overspill either way. Technique seems entirely freed to follow the implied directions of tones; he listens to the music, allows us to listen, and follows without hesitation, interruption or even comment, as if he's in contact with elemental forces. At least, that is the only way I can find to express the amazing intuitive flows and distributions of sound-matter and energy in these pieces.

Aoki plays structured melodic improvisations which tend to juxtapose predetermined repetitive melodic phrases to which he returns again and again. But these themes are often not strong enough to bear all the repetitions they get and he doesn't always do much else with them. He has a powerful, dark tone and there are some good ideas behind it all, but somehow (for me) they never quite get to be musical facts. Something tells me he isn't quite ready for a solo recording yet. Maybe next time.

RICHARD SCOTT

MOSE ALLISON

MY BACKYARD

Blue Note 7 938402 CD

Ever Since I Stole The Blues; You Call It Jagger's, Big Brother, Sentimental Fool, Stranger In My Own Homeowne, Was, The Gittin' Paid Walter, Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde, That's Your Red Wagon, Long Song, Slappy Lagoon, My Backyard
Mose Allison (p, v), Tony Dagradi (ts), Steve Masakowski (g), Bill Huntington (b), John Vlachos (d). Rec: December 1989.

DAVE FRISHBERG

LET'S EAT HOME

Concord Jazz 4402 CD/LP

Brenda Starr, Let's Eat Home, Al Cohn Medley, Muddy, The Masher, I Was Ready, Strange Man, Billy Strayhorn Medley, A Ship Without A Sail, Lookin' Good, The Underdog
Dave Frishberg (p, v), Snooky Young (t), Bob McDonnell (vib), Jim Houghan (b), Jeff Jernikoff (d). Rec: August 1989.

HUMOUR, as is well known, is an extremely personal thing. There seems little reason, for example, idiosyncratic taste aside, why I

should approve wholeheartedly of Mose Allison while simultaneously remaining totally unimpressed by Dave Frishberg.

They're both smart, cynical and cool, delivering their wry comments on life and love in catchy songs with snappy lyrics, sung in what must be admitted to be voices unlikely to compete with Bobby McFerrin. Both have assembled supremely competent backing groups, Allison digging around in New Orleans and coming up with a formidably sympathetic band, Frishberg going for a more mainstream but nevertheless excellent aggregation featuring the occasional pungent trumpeter of veteran Snooky Young.

I think the explanation may lie in my perception of where the dividing line between clever wit and smart-ass flippancy is drawn. Allison, justly famous for his erudition and

their consequential absence henceforward from our lives: You can wake up in the morning and they won't come tumbling down/Your woman can leave you and they won't be coming round. Ouch! Both men have their reflective sides, but where Allison expends his thoughts on such topics as the ozone layer, the diminishing resource of personal privacy, Frishberg gets all sentimental about, of all things, a baseball pitcher. Now if it was Richard Hadlee he was singing about . . .

CHRIS PARKER

CHARLIE PARKER

THE HIGHEST FLYING BIRD
Parade PAR2002 CD

Moose The Moose, Yardbird Suite, Ornithology, Scapple From The Apple, Scapple From The Apple, Rocker, Sly Monsoon, Moose The Moose, Star Eyes, The Time The Dream? On Me, Cool Blues, My Little Snake Shoes, Lester Leaps In, Laura

Parker (as), Miles Davis (t), Wendell Gray (ts), Dodo Marmarosa, Duke Jordan, Walter Bishop (p), Arv Garrison, Mundell Lowe (g), Vic McMillan, Tommy Potter, Teddy Kotick (b), Roy Porter, Max Roach, Roy Haynes (d). Collective personnel. Rec: March 1946–September 1952.

THE GREAT SESSIONS 1947/1948 (sic)
Jazz Anthology 550082 CD

Deena Lee, Everything I Have Is Yours, Fats Flats; You For Two, Don't Blame Me, Gerson's High, Koko, Ornithology, Cheryl, Koko, Bird Of Paradise
Parker (as), Fats Navarro, Red Rodney (t), John LaPorta (cl), Allen Eager (ts), Lennie Tristano, Al Haig (p), Billy Bauer (g), Porter (b), Buddy Rich, Haynes (d), Sarah Vaughan (v). Collective personnel. Rec: November 1947, December 1949.

BIRD AT THE ROOST Vols 1, 2, 3, 4
Savoy Jazz/Vogue 650124/5/6/7 CD

52 tracks including *Big Fish; On A Slow Boat To China, Hot House, Salt Peanuts, Half Nelson, White Christmas, East Of The Sun, On Top Of Old Mount, Barbecue, Night In Tunisia, Chasin' The Bird*
Parker (as), Davis, Kenny Doherty (t); Lucky Thompson (ts), Milt Jackson (vib), Tadd Dameron, Haig (p); Curley Russell, Potter (b); Roach, Joe Harris (d); Dave Lambert, Buddy Stewart (v). Collective personnel. Rec: September 1948–March 1949.

MORE UNISSUED Vols 1, 2
Royal Jazz RJD505/6 CD

All Of Me, I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me, Embraceable You, Hot House, Cool Blues; Ornithology, Scapple From The Apple, Out Of Nowhere, Now's The Time, Cool Blues; Anthropology, Embraceable You, Cheryl, Salt Peanuts; You Stuffed Out Of A Dream,



literacy, is an acute satirist, whether dealing with the universal: the ephemeral nature of individual experience ("Was"); the topical: the tension between self-indulgence and social responsibility ("Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde"); or merely his own profession: the genesis of an act-filling song ("Long Song"). Frishberg, on the other hand, is a glib commentator on foibles, quirks and, occasionally, social attitudes, but crucially lacks Allison's depth. A Frishberg couplet is likely to run thus: I was ready, like the battleships at Pearl Harbor/I was steady, like a shave with a part-time barber (punchline: "But she wasn't ready for me") – it trips easily from the tongue, but leaves no mark on its target.

Allison's lyrics are barbed. Accused by a UK journalist of "stealing the blues", he sardonically acknowledges the theft and warns us of



Now's The Time, Emancipate

Parker (as), Rodney, Tony Fruscella (t); Bill Harris (tb); Buddy DeFranco (cl); Zoot Sims (s); Tristano, Kenny Drew (p); Eddie Safranski, Russell (b); Kenny Clarke, Haynes, Lawrence Marable, Don Lamond, Art Blakey (d). Collective personnel. Rec. 1950-1953.

THE PARKER discography continues to enlarge with new live recordings, even if the studio out-takes must be exhausted following the Verve CD box. Not much above is totally new, with the exception of most of the Royal Jazz albums, but the Vogues (also available separately) are some of the best live Bird.

The first two albums have been much reused but the music is almost all extraordinary. In the studio Parker took obvious care to get a good overall take and thus "wasted" a lot of viable improv (which then appeared anyway, mostly after his death). In live performance, because nobody was going to hear it more than once (he thought), Bird was free. Free to create longer lines or take greater rhythmic liberties, free to play outrageous quotations, free to coast and still sound good, free on one track (*At The Roust Vol 3*) to stumble all over the place musically and then fall literally asleep. The eavesdropping listener is free too, not burdened by the historic status of accepted studio classics but able to feel through the inadequate recording what it was like to hear Parker off the cuff and in the flesh.

Prime examples are the '52 tracks on *Parade*, which were actually first released as *Bird Is Free*. This date is the source of three tracks from the film *Bird* including the storming "Lester Leaps In"; you don't get hi-fi sound, but you do get Parker free of Monty Alexander and with Max Roach. The impact of these, and the long "Scraple" with Wardell Gray, is heightened through being preceded by four of the studio classics. The Jazz Anthology has better sound on the four 1949 Carnegie Hall extracts but, on four of the '47 broadcast items, Bird doesn't solo.

Royal Jazz's Vol 1 has a film tie-in too by including the opening two tunes with Tristano (recently also issued on Philology), which had never been released until Clint Eastwood used them — mainly, I suspect, because of the song-titles — while the next two tracks (new to me) have Bird being ignored by party revellers instead of the enthusiastic audiences elsewhere. All new to disc is Vol 2, with the hectic sound (emphasized by the reproduction) of a Birdland

broadcast followed by a more laid-back (and more distorted) near half-hour with the legendary Fruscella and a bass-less rhythm-section.

What to say about the frequently issued Vogue airshots, except that this is a fantastic body of work? Well engineered on the whole (the piano sometimes misses out) and showing the togetherness and looseness of a steady group — Lucky and Milt only appear briefly, and the vocalists even more briefly, on Vol 4. Now's the time to throw out earlier releases of this material, unless you have the five Savoy LPs which include all the babblings of announcer Symphony Sid. Here, he's only allowed a few words at the start of each CD, and then the band is made to go from one piece to the next without a pause for breath. Not even Bird was quite that hectic.

BRIAN PRIESTLEY



**GRAWE/REISEGER/HEMINGWAY
SONIC FICTION
hat ART 6043 CD**

Alten Core I, II, III; Fibulation; Aspects Of Sonambulum/Denure Scuttle, Aspects Of Sonambulum/Sleepwitzer, Fangled Talk; Mating. Georg Grawe (p), Ernst Reijseger (cl), Gerry Hemingway (d, perc). Rec. 14 March 1989.

SWITZERLAND was the accidental birthplace of Dada, a convenient geographical compromise between France, Germany, Romania, Holland, and the USA. The sensibility that informs *Sonic Fiction*, from the Swiss hat Art label, has something of the same inspired contingency, three players of markedly different temperament, united by an (apparently) unconscious antagonism to the fixed resolutions of both "jazz" and "New Music", content with their rocking horse, affirmative, unpro-

grammatic and surprisingly exact in execution.

If "Aspects Of Sonambulum" as a title sounds disconcertingly like a Surrealist manifesto, its impact is all about precision, about knowing exactly where to put your feet in the dark of the sleep of reason. Which is some kind of sufficiency for effective improvised music. Grawe, Reijseger and Hemingway sound as if they have been rehearsing these pieces for years. There is an exactness to "Denure Scuttle" and a sweetness to "Sleepwitzer" that seems almost unfeasible. Hemingway in particular is able to catch the harmonic structure building between his colleagues and turn it into a signal-sharp morsel far removed from the contentless twittering of most "improvising" percussionists. Like Eddie Prevost, he is able to swing even when playing completely free and his range of articulation is quite extraordinary.

The long "Fangled Talk" is slightly disappointing, a solitary lapse into what is usually called self-indulgence, but which is more likely to be simple lapse of attention. Grawe, one of the most enterprising of the post-Schlappensch players, is apt to dissolve his own most acute observations in a sublimation of repetition and avoidance. Reijseger, by contrast, knows how to enjoy an idea and when to dispense with it. The three parts of "Alten Core" (the reference to Ruth, if that's what it is, escapes me) form a delicate suite; Hemingway's brushes, four-inch whitewash jobs by the sound of it, swish sensuously and the cellist plays relatively straight against Grawe's meditative exploration. "Fibulation" pushes Reijseger out a bit, tale-spinning, fibrillating wildly as the cardiac rhythm goes haywire. The final "Mating" is equally remarkable.

In sum, and in parts, an extraordinary set, delivering far more from the pianist than recent work with the Gruben Klang Orkester or the earlier hat Art *Songs And Variations*, and substantially confirming Gerry Hemingway's stature as a percussionist of the highest rank.

BRIAN MORTON

**ELIZABETH MACONCHY
THE COMPLETE STRING QUARTETS
VOLUME 2
Unicorn-Kanchana DKP 9081
CD**

String Quartets No 5 (1948); No 6 (1950); No 7 (1955); No 8 (1967). Bingham String Quartet. Stephen Bingham, Mark



Messenger (vn), Brenda Stewart (vla), Miriam Lowbury (clo) Rec: 28-30 March 1989.

In a recent *Observer* magazine, a series called *The Experts' Expert* featured composers talking about their favourite composers. Sir Michael Tippett named Gershwin, but remarked that "his tragic early death in 1958 meant that he did not have to live through the dereliction of Vietnam" (George in fact died even more tragically before Pearl Harbour, of course). Another oddball testimonial came from Tippett's near-contemporary Dame Elizabeth Maconchy, who selected her daughter Nicola LeFanu as a favourite living composer - "I don't say that just because she is my daughter" Nicola returns the compliment in the admirably objective sleeve-note biography to these recordings.

About Ms Le Fanu I don't know, but there's no doubt about Elizabeth Maconchy's rightful status in the pantheon of contemporary composers. This three-volume set of recordings by Unicorn-Kanchana (the third volume is due out in the Autumn) serves to show how high her string quartet cycle rates in 20th-century composition (very high). It is the form she has concentrated on, and perhaps the privacy of the medium has not encouraged her wider recognition. The present acclaimed series of recordings (Volume One was reviewed in *Wire* 72) may do something to change that.

As Paul Griffiths remarks in his invaluable book *The String Quartet*, the individual quartet has naturally been viewed as part of a larger whole (the cycle, the tradition). But this doesn't mean that Maconchy belongs with those other prolific contributors who regard the genre in a more "workaday fashion". My string quartet music is an impassioned argument," writes this lucid commentator on her own work, and the passion is almost always evident, never far below the surface. Tough, often violent, never over-cerebral, this gritty uncompromising music compels attention from the listener.

Quartet No 5, which commences this recording, is mainly driving, mosaic, folk dance-rhythms and modality predominant, Bartokian. A new sound-world begins to open out in No 6 - the opening passacaglia is strikingly reminiscent of, and as beautiful as, Britten's from *Peter Grimes*. No 7 (1955) is palindromic in structure like Bartok's fourth quartet and Britten's third. The final quartet is from a

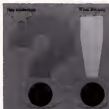
decade later and predictably more dissonant and fractured. From its unpredictability and more extreme sonorities it is clear that the recording of Maconchy's most recent quartets could be the most compelling yet. For this listener, it is hard to believe that music of such quality could have suffered from such comparative neglect.

ANDY HAMILTON

RAY ANDERSON

WHAT BECAUSE

Gramavision GV 79453 CD/MC/LP
Allegory Creasable, Let's Fall In Love, The Warm-Up; Intro, I'm Just A Lucky So-And-So, What Because; Off-Peat, Raven-a-mug, Waltz For Phloob.
Anderson (tb, v), John Hicks (p), Allan Jaffe (g), Mark Dresser (b), Pharoah AkLaff (d). Rec: 15, 21, 22 November 1989.



MARK DRESSER'S Promethean bass-playing powers one of the heaviest bands on the scene, and the leader's energy never flags. Like the Ray Anderson stage-show, *What Because* grabs you by the lapels, and won't let you go till the last note. Ray must be today's most complete trombone player - he can play everything on his instrument, his control of timbre and tone is mastery, he can fill the auditorium with a broadside flurry or subdue it with a whisper.

And yet... what might be the trombonist's Achilles heel, irrelevant in the involvement of live performance, rather mars the album. It could just be the baneful influence of Naked City and those New York folks with funny names that I don't know much about. But I suspect that all along, Ray hasn't been too bothered with melody, and on a long set of mostly his own compositions it shows. The

themes of "Allegory", "Warm-Up" and "What Because" are clever but cursory rhythmic ideas which give the soloists little to work on - unlike the more standard repertoire of the excellent album *Blues Brad In The Box* (1988). (Even there, on examination, the leader's solos avoided strong melodic outline.)

This is to focus on Ray's solitary weakness. But if you can produce his tonal variety on your instrument, why not seduce the listener with pure sound? And there are wonderful things on *What Because*. Mark Dresser consistently astonishes with his range of ideas and effects, not to mention his towering beat. Ray also sings - a striking mix of Teen Waits and Louis Armstrong on Duke's blues "I'm Just A Lucky So-And-So", replete with some kind of vocal multiphonics. I'm hoping Ray's next album features the Japanese pianist he brought with him on his 1990 UK tour - Fumao Izabashi was an ideal foil and lived up to his name by wrecking the Leeds Trades Club piano in a brilliantly individual way. *What Because* doesn't quite do justice to that memorable tour.

ANDY HAMILTON

LOI COXHILL/GEORGE HASLAM/ HOWARD RILEY/PAUL RUTHERFORD THE HOLYWELL CONCERT Slam 302 CD

In Transit, Half Piped, No How, Blues, Glow, Ivory Horn, Osgood.
Paul Rutherford (tb), Loi Coxhill (ss), George Haslam (b), Howard Riley (p). Collective personnel. Rec: 22 February 1990.

THE GENRE of melody instrument plus piano has a long tradition in classical music and a scarcely less conspicuous one in jazz. The present disc has three such duets - along with two wind solos, a wind trio and a full quartet - and it is these tracks which yield the most satisfying results.

The contribution of Howard Riley is the crucial factor. His use of driving, urgent rhythms and walking bass lines in the duet with Coxhill coaxes the latter into a more ardent and forthright mode than is his norm, yet the playing is still full of his whooping glissandi and soaring, sinuous lines, thankfully shorn of any whyness. The same can also be said of his solo piece. In the duet with Haslam, furious free-jazz playing from Riley meets with a sympathetic and white-hot response, man-

GRF

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New Note

take cover

AFRICAN POP AND BEYOND

Take Cover is a new music quarterly which provides what the market currently lacks, a magazine devoted exclusively to the new music of Africa, Latin America and the so-called sounds of the Caribbean. It is edited by Chris Stapleton (co-author of the authoritative African Art Book and editor of *Sitar*, monthly newsletter) and published by Southern Ray Ltd, publishers of *Folk Notes* magazine. It provides essential background reading, with interviews with major and up-and-coming artists, the latest record reviews and a wealth of news and opinion.

Issue CD, out now, includes: Major interviews with, Diké Osifele, the cloth-and-fingered Zairian guitarist; Puka, the godfather of Colombian music and Redaile, the singer whose recent hit *La Cumbia* has been one of Latin's top sellers in years; and Thomas Maytana, Zimbabwe's rockman extraordinaire. Features on Joe K., an exciting London-based hip-hop artist; producer, Zulu Longa Longa, Zairian's most notable boy; The Bantu Boys and Ash Whiteley - from *It's*, to the Anglo-Afro musician; *Heartbeats* - what's cooking in the music from London-day John Armstrong; the rise of Afro-House, and a regular out, Afro-Latin style, in Newcastle. The rise and rise of Egyptian pop. The hidden political agenda in modern African pop. Latin and African news from Cameroon, Nigeria, Tanzania, London and Paris. The man who is rocking *Shikis*, the phenomenon that is shaking Sierra Leone's villages. Plus further news, views, reviews and opinions. All at your up to the minute *Take Cover* - we cover it, you take it!

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aged without the reedsman sacrificing the warmth and richness of his tone.

Rutherford's playing has often struck me as like someone trying to do too much in too small a space of time, and his solo contribution here is no exception. I wish that he would sometimes ease up on the extended playing techniques and just blow his horn. In duet with Riley this is achieved to some extent, with the pianist meeting him half-way in a sensitive exploitation of piano sonorities.

The ensemble pieces are a disappointment. There is little empathy or flow. At the few instances where the music clicks it soon falls apart. It is interesting in the final quartet to hear Riley trying to weld the music together and engender some coherence. He even resorts to a thunderous pedal-point to create unity, its sudden removal leading to a pseudo-atmospheric ending which tries to convince us that we have heard something better than we have.

This is an uneven and at times frustrating disc, but it is worth buying for the duets alone.

STEPHEN HOLMES

ROVA SAXOPHONE QUARTET/ALVIN CURRAN
ELECTRIC RAGS II
New Albion NA027 CD

Electric Rags II
ROVA: Jon Raskin (bs, ss); Larry Ochs (ts, ss) ss; Steve Adams (ts, ss) ss; Bruce Ackley (wb, with Alvin Curran (electronics); Scott Gresham-Lancaster (Oberheim expander); Jacob Burckhardt (trp). Rec: September 1989.

ROVA SAXOPHONE QUARTET
LONG ON LOGIC
Sound Aspects SAS 037 LP

Long On Logic, Hope, Song And Dance, Singsong For Carlos; The Shopper, K124 - For Vasily Kandinsky; Wig Hat Sax Set
ROVA - personnel as above. Rec: 1989-90.

ATTABOY, ROVA. OK, so the Kronos are snappier dressers, but this excellent saxophone ensemble have always done as much if not more as their stringy counterparts to assemble a more accurate model of contemporary art music than the one which still holds the conservative tradition to be the dominant force. With these two recordings, ROVA (or, as has been suggested, AROA - there's nothing like a personnel change to wreak havoc

with one's acronym) tackle a diverse assortment of musics with all the confidence we've come to expect.

In the UK, Alvin Curran occupies that peculiar territory between legend and non-entity. His music creeps onto the fringes of our Eurocentric map of the avant-garde in a manner which is easier to allude to than to quantify. We have little enough to go on; you won't hear people casually whistling his compositions. His sleeve-note CV, despite being accompanied by one of those meaningfully austere portrait photographs which epitomise the Sincere American Artist, is impressive and interesting, focusing on his achievements in the USA and mainland Europe and culminating with the news that he lives in Rome; in the UK we largely don't hear about him.

As an example of Curran's music, *Electric*



Rags II is a mighty careful. The piece hinges on its performance system, which not only entails each saxophone controlling a synthesiser but also involves the transformation and augmentation of the music by a largely self-determining computer program. The results, however, are closer to Anthony Braxton than Charles Dodge, and make for startling listening.

But what happens when a couple of guitarists write for a saxophone quartet? Fred Frith, whose compositional talents continue to develop apace, contributes much to *Long On Logic*. The first three tracks are all by Frith and take us on a good-humoured gallop through a large chunk of his personal musical history. Elements of Weill, Eisler, New Orleans, English folk dance and indeed Fred Frith all combine within the essentially optimistic style

which tends to dominate FF's work. This sets us up nicely for the fourth track, a rapid-fire contribution from fellow plank-spanker (only in this magazine can the phrase be taken literally), Henry Kaiser, sometime collaborator with Frith in the field of near-improvised music. The remaining tracks are classic ROVA, penned by members of the group and as fine an example of their exciting and highly stylised approach as you'll hear anywhere.

TOM CORBIN

ALDO ROMANO
TO BE ORNETTE TO BE
Owl L057 CD

The Blurring, W R U; Lovers; Tears Inside, Conco De Sosa Letra's Sonnet, Mind And Time, Check Up, Half Way, Fast Music; The Blurring (Variations); Joyce; Theme From A Symphony/Skies Of America, Di.
Aldo Romano (td); Franco D'Andrea (p); Paolo Fresu (tr, fltn, Yamaha SPX90); Furio Di Castri (b). Rec: November 1989.

"THE FUTURE of homolodic music is an international call for individuals" - Ornette Coleman. If we didn't know before we know now, after Zorn's knockabout treatments, that Ornette's pieces are robust enough to survive the roughest handling, Aldo Romano approaches the music with love rather than boxing gloves. Maybe he's a bit too misty-eyed: "I have said a number of times that if Ornette had been Italian, he would have composed *La Traviata*." Coleman doesn't need that kind of endorsement. Call me uncouth, but I prefer Prime Time to Verdi, am glad Ornette's roots are in Texas R & B.

Determined to play modern music, Ornette has had to live with the fact that most jazz musicians and critics still view the early Atlantic as his creative peak. The Ornette that Romano reveres is pre-Atlantic. Five of these tracks are from the *Something Else and Tomorrow Is The Question* albums. With "Check Up" and "W R U", Romano's group enters the 1960s. They don't make much headway with the "Skies Of America"/"Dancing In Your Head" theme, though the simple blues of "Feet Music" (*In All Languages*) presents no problems. Needless to say, Romano's version is closer to the Old Quartet's than Prime Time's. Perhaps the emphasis on early Coleman is to some degree enforced by this quartet's line-up.

Outside of Horace Silver's and John Lewis's early stabs at "Lonely Woman", Ornette's music has rarely been taken up by pianists and



for good reason, since some of its implications are anti-pantheistic. It's about *time*, not chord changes. Paul Bley, in at the beginning of the Ornette story, understood this well. D'Andrea takes note of Bley's astringent, austere approach but can't resist the temptation to become rhapsodic; some will consider him inappropriately lush. The group's take on "Loarsine" and the driving "Mind And Time" reminds me of the old Jarrett group, which makes a kind of sense (historic continuum represented by Haden and Redman's presence, emphasis on *melody*, etc.).

Everybody plays well, Romano closer to Higgins's slack cymbalism than Blackwell's inimitable simplicity, Fresu a smoother trumpeter than Cherry has ever been.

It's tempting to see the record as another retro gesture in an unimaginative time (and with the great Paul Motian currently *On Broadway* for the duration we have reason to worry). But Romano's always been a history man (go back to Lacy's '65 *Disposability* LP where he works the Monk repertoire) and he does have a claim on this music by proxy, as the drummer in Cherry's first European band.

Final verdict? Mixed. Romano's quartet doesn't address Ornette's challenge to make music in the present tense. For all that, this is an enjoyable jazz record.

STEVE LAKE

JORDAN/DAVIS/Williams/BURRAGE FOUR PLAY DIW 836 CD/LP

Tokyo Road, Japanese Dream; I Mean You, For My Nephews, Ho-Fly; Misako - Beautiful Shore.
Clifford Jordan (ts), James Williams (p), Richard Davis (b); Ronnie Burrage (d). Rec: no details

Williams/Davis/BURRAGE I REMEMBER CLIFFORD DIW 601 CD/LP

As I Live And Breathe, I Remember Clifford, Take The Coltrane, Smokey, Fucci, Shelly; Sweet And Lovely.
James Williams (p), Richard Davis (b), Ronnie Burrage (d). Rec: no details

HAD THEY just remembered Clifford on the trio date, it might just have combusted. As it is, it never quite takes light or flight. Jordan's contributions to *Four Play* sound extraordinarily like Von Freeman and mark a further move away from the Griffin-influenced power-

playing of the 70s. Alongside Richard Davis (who, like Griffin, was a school friend back in Chicago), he's positively magisterial, holding back his answers until the others are committed and then coming in, like Freeman does, with an unexpected equation. Williams leaves him less room than he maybe likes; the effect is similar to his work with Cedar Walton, as opposed to what he was able to do with Andrew Hill on *Shades*.

Davis has often sounded too self-conscious as a soloist. Brian Priestley once called him "the most dominant bassist to appear since Charles Mingus", with the implication that dominance was not necessarily a virtue. In fact, he often plays more like Pettiford, leading as much with his chin as from the front, exposing himself cruelly. By contrast with Jordan, Davis sounds remarkably at ease with Wil-



liams, who works a standard with an excess of respect that disguises the inventiveness of his response ("I Remember Clifford" is a good instance of that) and writes ("Focus", "For My Nephews") with a good deal of confidence.

It's a warmly toned set, typical of DIW's usual carefully engineered product. Burrage's drums are beautifully caught, as are the sharper bass notes. "Japanese Dream" and Davis's "Misako" on the quartet disc, Frank Foster's "Simone" and Phineas Newborn's "Shelly" on the other are near perfect. The last of these pushes Burrage's Mannaish style into the foreground, which is exactly where it belongs, except for his apparent nervousness with the medium tempo which is often a drummer's acid test.

Worth the price of admission for Davis alone, these are two fine and finely balanced

sets, superbly recorded. Just don't forget Clifford the next time, guys.

BRIAN MORTON

CORRIE EN DE BROKKEN ALLES BEWIEGT BVHAAST 9005 CD

No Rawlows Today, Het Woordste, Vooruit, een suite, parts 1-4; Danica Characteristica; The Valence De Not Necessarily Get Progressively More Difficult; It's A Coincidence; Alles Beweegt, The Paard Te Paard, Houdt De Tiel.
Angelo Verploegen (s, flts), Tobias Delius (ts), Joost Bus (tb), Corne van Binsbergen (g); Hen Oftermann (b, el-b, rba), Arend Niks (d). Rec: December 1989, March 1990.

ALLES BEWIEGT: everything in motion. Not a bad capsule summary of this young Dutch band's approach. They cover some ground, probably too much for their own good, rejecting the need for a single, identifiable band style and running the gamut from over-fussy jazz-rock to free funk, free improvisation and contemporary classical (Cuban composer Leo Brouwer's "Danza Caracteristica").

I'm not yet sure if the record hangs together as a whole but the flow of the varied programme rules out boredom and, along the way, there are some gripping solos and inspired group interplay. There are also occasional dead ends, such as "It's A Coincidence", half Hanns Eisler cabaret, half Breuker circus romp - we've been up that path often enough with the BVHAAST label.

The group sounds best when Corrie van Binsbergen decisively takes the lead; she knows what it means to be a *modern* guitarist, and is marvelously expressive on both acoustic and electric instruments. Percussive, dampened chords, Bailey-ish string noise (plectrum rasped down the frets), smeared blues flourishes . . . At the tail end of "Houdt De Tiel", past the infuriatingly clever fuzak head, she stomps on the wah-wah pedal and comes on like Hendrix, soaring over big band riffs from the horns and Arend Niks's battering drums.

Van Binsbergen's four part suite "Vooruit" is encyclopaedic in scope, Part One containing some of the album's strongest free playing, Part Two with a long guitar solo somewhere between Sharrock and Santana, blues-drenched lines stretching out in long sustains. Part Three is subtle chamber music, with sensitive arco bass and an almost minimalistically re-



petitive horn pattern that's finally blown away by Buis's growling, spluttering trombone and the increasingly active drums whose detail is echoed in hyperactive flurries of notes from the acoustic guitar. In Part Four, Verploegen's speeding trumpet takes over, first muted and then open horn, riding out a final dizzy theme. In general, this is an impressive showing. And when Corrie En De Brokken put aside the more generic jazz-rock gestures, the group will really be moving.

STEVE LAKE

INGRAM MARSHALL

THREE PENITENTIAL VISIONS/HIDDEN VOICES

Elektra Nonesuch 9 79227 CD/MC

Three Penitential Visions, Hidden Voices

Ingram Marshall (tapes, sampling, composition).

Rec: no details.

NOT ANOTHER American minimalist composer? Actually, no. There is more to this music than that label would imply. For a start, we have here two pre-recorded tape play-back pieces as opposed to instrumental scores for live performance.

In "Three Penitential Visions" there are saxophone tape-loops, voices, bird-song, large building ambience, church bells and electric keyboards. Yet despite this, the music is not a Terry Riley/Phil Glass/Eno/Kitaro mix. It is more akin to the output of West Coast electronic music studios, which is what it is. There is no serialism or any other "classical" compositional system. The methods are more intuitive with an ear for new timbres and unusual juxtapositions and combinations of timbres, combined with a renewed interest in tonality, albeit redefined for post-atonal sensibilities.

In this frequently bizarre and surreal world Marshall seems entirely at home. Most of the original sounds are processed and mixed almost beyond recognition into something of his own creation, not for a gratuitous display of technical wizardry, but to create new sounds for a new aesthetic. The first two sections are meditative and slow moving, while the final section combines arpeggiated keyboard patterns with a gentle rhythmic impetus. It gets a little too near to Phil Glass territory for comfort, but not for long. The music as a whole has a symphonic depth and solidity.

Indeed, there is more harmonic density, expressive range, development and creative unpredictability than in much that is labelled minimal, ambient or new age.

"Hidden Voices" is more tangible and approachable, but perhaps less captivating than "Visions". Constructed principally from soprano vocalise (Cheryl Bensman Rowe) and sampled field recordings of laments from Eastern European funerals and weddings, the music is suitably melancholic and nostalgic. The extended use of simple minor key tonalities and the emotionally loaded timbre of massed voices makes for a more traditionally expressive music. Nevertheless, if this is aural wallpaper, as a co-audient of my review copy suggested, then I would like my whole house decorated with it!

STEPHEN HOLMES



FAST LICKS

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ELVIN JONES: LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD (*Enja CD 2036*); MAX ROACH AND ARCHIE SHEPP: THE LONG MARCH PART I (*hat ART CD 6041*); MAX ROACH LONG AS YOU'RE LIVING (*Enja CD 4074*). Roach and Jones were born only two years apart yet represent different musical generations. Max was an essential element of Charlie Parker's finest groups in the late 40s, whilst Elvin was the backbone of the classic Coltrane quartet.

Both were enormously influential on the evolution of the drummer's role, both moving away from the obvious statement of the beat without losing a powerful momentum. Roach has never stopped developing. In these two sessions, 19 years apart, he can be heard in a hard bop context - full of succinct choruses by Julian Priester, the Brothers Turrentine and bassist Bobby Boswell - and a freer dialogue with Archie Shepp, one of the 60s iconoclasts who lasted because of the strength of his roots. The title track of the hat ART album lasts 26 minutes and never palls. Neither do Roach's lengthy solos: those on the Enja are more restrained, more melodic, leaving more spaces, but the sense of thematic development is just as clear as it is on the duo session. Elvin Jones is no mere melodist either, but he's generally a busier player. It's pianos out on these three albums, and apart from one track with Marvin Peterson in fine, incendiary form, Elvin's is a trio session. The Coltrane Quartet often became in effect a sax-drums duet, and Wilbur Little ends up playing gooseberry for much of the time. George Coleman stands his ground well, but it is not Coltrane. Jones dominates, and his command of the supple, multi-rhythmic approach is so sure that it's hard to realise how revolutionary it was - despite being based primarily in the flexible propulsion of the Roach school.

COE, OXLEY & CO: NUTTY (*hat ART CD 6046*). Oxley is as original and inventive a drummer as Max and Elvin, if less celebrated and influential. The "Co" denied a namecheck is bassist Chris Laurence, and like Coe and Oxley he is impressive whether playing the conventional role assigned to his instrument or searching in the far territories of improvised music. This session was recorded at the 1983 Willisau Festival (and was released on vinyl as *Natty (On Willisau)*) and the menu includes jazz standards, "standard" standards and much individual and original playing whatever the underlying material. With a record of such consistent quality, highlights are difficult to choose, but try the spiky pastoralism of "A Time There Was" to appreciate fully the versatility and fluency of their approach: Oxley takes the looseness and independence of the component parts of his playing to such lengths that he often sounds like at least two drummers.



KENNY GARRETT: PRISONER OF LOVE (*Atlantic 7-82046*). For those who find Kenny G too bland but David Sanborn too loud, this bowl of porridge (by another Kenny G) should be just right. As usual, you get the old three-phrase trick impeccably played against a heavily-stated beat, synthesizers and a funky bass. The presence of Miles Davis on some tracks is interesting, but only because he seldom works as a sideman. The music is all very predictable and controlled but the programme is quite varied and somehow I must admit that I enjoyed listening to it.

LESTER YOUNG: SAVOY RECORDINGS VOL. 1 (*Vogue 550104*). Cut on 18 April 1944, just a month after the wonderful date issued as *Six Cats And A Prince*, these two sessions – one with Earle Warren's Orchestra, the other with Johnny Guarneri's Swing Men – are, though falling short of the previous session's standard, still fresh and lively. There's nice work from Dickie Wells, Hank D'Amico and several trumpeters besides Pres himself, whose tone had by then fattened somewhat. The album includes alternative takes of four of the cuts and only one number, "Empty Hearted" from the Warren session, is missing from the day's produce.

NORBERT STEIN PATA ORCHESTRA: DIE WILGEN PFERGE DER ARMEN LEUTE (*JazzHart Musik JHM 39 CD*). TON ART: Zu (*bat ART CD 6034*). Here's a couple more European items to screw up your filing system. These are bands which mix in influences from many genres and, like Willem Breuker, seem capable of being at once both entirely serious and amusingly satirical. It's a very difficult trick, similar to scratching behind your left ear with your right foot, and has similar dire consequences if you don't get it quite right. It seems to be a skill largely confined to mainland Europe where jazz-based bands are concerned, though the US and the UK have produced a few rock bands with the right abilities. Zu is allegedly based on a "grammar of contradiction" (well, I can handle that) and joins together "the ruins of exhausted sign systems". The concepts are full of sophisticated post-grad humour, dry and erudite, but fortunately the music is more fun than that, and there is some nice playing from Bernhard Spahn (alto), Johann Karl

Steiner (bass clarinet) and Burkhard Strangl (guitar) in particular. Stein's album sounds more formal but seems more rigorously organised than Zu. He writes well, whether in sumptuous and evocative ensembles for brass or graceful reed-led lines, and the soloists I'd single out on this one are Hennes Hehn (tenor) and Thomas Heberer (trumpet).

JAMES MORRISON: SNAPPY DOO (*WEA 9031-71211*). Morrison is a multi-instrumentalist and, by dint of overdubbing, functions as a one-man big band on some tracks. I can't abide a smart-arse but it has to be admitted that Morrison is good. He even makes the euphonium sound plausible. On this well-balanced programme he neglects to play guitar, bass and drums, which are left to Herb Ellis, Ray



Brown and Jeff Hamilton. Brown, despite sporting a pair of keds that even a Stone Roses fan would spurn, is as superb a bassist as ever.

PHIL WOODS/TOMMY FLANAGAN/RED MITCHELL: THREE FOR ALL (*Enja CD 3081-67*). Apart from the naff pun in the title there's nothing to find fault with on this album. When it was recorded in 1981 people were still asking why Woods had dismantled the marvellous European Rhythm Machine. They still wonder, but let's appreciate what Woods was doing. His alto has always been tough and piercingly emotional, but capable also of haunting, unerving beauty. This session also draws out what has too often been under wraps over the last two decades, the subtle, sinewy invention of the great Tommy Flanagan.

Mitchell's no slouch either, and engineer David Baker again achieves impeccable clarity.

JOEL FUTTERMAN: INNER CONVERSATIONS (*Ear-Rational ECD 1019*). The last item on this record, "The Interaction Suite", played by a quartet of Futterman, Jimmy Lyons, Richard Davis and Robert Adkins, was recorded in 1984 and released as an album in itself. This CD adds 35 minutes of solo tracks from 1988. The sharp, clear recording of these pieces does justice to Futterman's dense clusters and ringing cascades. He is in the Cecil Taylor tradition, and, like latter-day Taylor, tempers technical complexity with emotional penetrability. The Suite (Lyons's last recording date) is fierce stuff, no prisoners taken, and was especially pleasing to us Richard Davis fans who feared he was lost to mainstream and session work.

MARKUS STOCKHAUSEN/SIMON STOCKHAUSEN/JO THÖNES: APARIS (*ECM 1404*). I was pleasantly surprised by this, which has far more substance than I was expecting. Much of the music here, especially Markus's trumpet, would feel at home in Stockhausen's *pie's Licht* cycle, but there's nothing wrong in that as far as I'm concerned. The title track is beautiful, meditative and mystic. It is followed by fractured, agitated sounds on "Poseidon", which develops into electrojazzrock, and from there on the music covers the contemporary mainstream waterfront fairly thoroughly; there are even sections that would not sound out of place on Garrett's album.

VARIOUS ARTISTS: AUSTRAL VOICES (*New Allure NA028*). This is about a beat. The composers represented all work in Australia, though not all of them originate there. They do not constitute a school in any obvious way, other than a shared sensitivity to timbre, resonance and an almost mystical interaction with the sound sources, whether Sarah Hopkins's own performance of her pieces for cello and "whirly" (in this case a plastic hosepipe) or Alan Lamb's manipulation of the wind in three miles of telegraph wire. The music presented here is never less than fascinating and most of the time is quite magically lovely. Harass your local dealer to stock it.

accuses Murray of "rockist myopia" because he hates Chick Corea: somewhat bizarre when Murray is arguing for Ornette Coleman and Blood Ulmer as the true heirs of Hendrix rather than Led Zeppelin and Iron Maiden! Gilroy seems to confuse danceable jazz with Fusion. As a marketing term, Fusion described the commercialized encounter of electric jazz and "progressive" rock (Tommy Bolin going from Billy Cobham's band to Deep Purple, for example): if it is now used as a term of abuse, so be it. Fusion produced pretentious rock and straitjacketed jazz, which is about the worst musical combination in the world. It was also the complete opposite to Hendrix.

Miles went on looking for guitarists who could play the blues. John Scofield's curling lines are preferable to John McLaughlin's portentous assertions on *You're Under Arrest*, but his refusal to take harmonic exploration beyond a kind of narcissistic teasing makes his own music ultimately confining. Mike Stern, whose BB King-isms on Miles's *Star People* are at least trenchant, is crucifyingly boring on his own. Fusion has become the establishment yardstick of "quality" playing.

The Black Rock Coalition is a laudable attempt to reassert the black guitar player. Why should black people playing heavy metal be considered so outlandish? With heavy metal absorbing a large percentage of American record buyers' spending, it can even suggest a conspiracy to marginalise black musicians. All highly paradoxical, given Hendrix's central place in the invention of rock.

BRC founder Vernon Reid played guitar in Ronald Shannon Jackson's Decoding Society, one of the first outfits to emerge from Ornette Coleman's harmolodic revolution. Reid's language and politics are steeped in the black radical tradition that moves in jazz as its element. He has the confidence to plague the industry with his overtly commercial – but black – rock band because of what Ornette has done in showing the limitless capacity of his improvising method to absorb musical styles.

Jazz rediscovered rock guitar through the services of two musicians: James Blood Ulmer and Sonny Sharrock. Interestingly enough, neither derive directly from Hendrix. It is more a case of parallel development. They are strong enough to make a full-blooded use of the instrument's potential: *this* has made Hendrix relevant to improvised music.

Blood Ulmer emerged as accompanist to organists Hank Marr and Big John Patton. The organ is a powerblast instrument, and to cut through it the usual jazz guitar sound – Wes Montgomery's plummy evocation of mellow sax lines – is insufficient: you need edge and more edge. Organ guitar (Eddie McFadden, Donel O'Levy, Jimmy Ponder, Melvin Sparks) develops an uncanny resemblance to the West African kora, with its chopped lack of sustain. Ulmer homed in on that resemblance to develop a blunt, rhythmic, direct-from-the-fingers sound. Coupled with his nonpareil ear for harmonic surprise, aggravation and suggestion, his playing denies all the bluster associated with rock amplification.

It also brings out something in Hendrix that rock guitarists miss: his attack, which as BB King has pointed out, is second-to-none. This startlingly abrupt, "anti-rock" style has given Ulmer an individuality that allows him to write Hendrix-style blues cameos, sing like him *and* deal with the grand political themes without danger of mere pastiche. Combined with Ornette's sax (*Tales Of Captain Black*) or Shannon Jackson's thunder (*America*) the results are triumphant assertions of rebellious guitar. Who needs Iron Maiden after that?

Sonny Sharrock is not a harmolodic player, though it is harmolodics that allows us to perceive what he does as jazz. He has always listened to tenor players rather than guitarists ("every day, you must have your regular Coltrane" (5)) and plays sound rather than guitarism. In the mid-80s he extended stingingly interrogative guitar – Frank Zappa without feedback – over clomping Cuban-inflected rock. Last Exit is his best environment, where Peter Brötzmann's free tenor meets him over a colossal Laswell/Jackson rhythm section. This is freely improvised guitar unafraid to make use of every PA nuance: Hendrix finally at home in a jazz environment.

SUCCESSFUL ENCOUNTERS between Hendrix's pop sensuality and improvisation included Rip Rig & Panic (in the early 80s) and Cassandra Wilson (now). Since Bern Nix and Charles Ellerbee danced the harmolodic guitar into existence on Ornette Coleman's epochal *Dancing In Your Head*, there is a new type of jazz guitarist who goes beyond the conventional virtuosity of Scofield, Stern and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

Jean Paul Bourelly, for example, released a stunning set of new wave blues on *Urban Cowboy* (Hendrix with spikes); Jeff Lee Johnson is developing a bewilderingly original guitar style in the Decoding Society; Joe Baiza combines the brute impact of rock with harmolodics in Universal Congress Of; Mitch Watkins's controlled style plays with Hendrix's beauteous distortions; Steve Masakowski and John Dirc contribute telling post-Hendrix solos in acoustic contexts.

By facing the harmonic challenge of Ornette Coleman's modernism – a method of making different keys and cultures co-exist and clash – jazz finds it can incorporate the untrammelled impact of Hendrix, something the cool experiments of Miles and the glossy academicism of Fusion fail to do. A crucial development – if jazz is to be more than a chamber music for the discerning few. •

(1) Quoted by Pete Shuster in his sleeve notes to the *Gangster It Back* album (Red Lightnin' RL0013), 1976

(2) A case most plausibly put in David Henderson's excellent *Scuse Me While I Kiss The Sky: The Life Of Jimi Hendrix* (New York, 1978).

(3) The *Sunday Times* – *Us Coloured Kulu* (JOYS159) Joy was a subsidiary of President, the rocksteady label.

(4) Charles Shaw Murray – *Crosscut Traffic: Jimi Hendrix And Post-war Pop* (London, 1988)

(5) Sonny Sharrock to Patrick Bernard, 28 March 1987, before playing with Gungee Baker at Mühle Hüniklen, Switzerland.

Before Hendrix – continued from page 36

1941 "Hoochie Blues" with Jay McShann and Christian's "Blues In B"), their ideas were coalescing along similar lines. Christian's after-hours experiments, captured on *Live Sessions 1941* (Jazz Anthology), together with his work with Benny Goodman, *Sextet With Charlie Christian* (CBS), show him well on his way to becoming one of the most influential musicians of his day.

In fact, despite his short life, his work with Goodman remains among the finest jazz recordings of all time. They provided the inspiration for a second generation of young, white guitarists who adapted Christian's long lines of frequently unaccented quavers with the essentially melodic/linear virtuosity of the Belgian guitarist Django Reinhardt. He had already been recording for 15 years by the time the cuts on *Djangoology '49* (RCA/Bluebird) were made, as good an example as any of his style. He had been long admired, if not specifically emulated by musicians, for his speed of execution, and was influential in demonstrating that the guitar – still very much the new kid on the block – could be adapted to the demanding improvisational requirements of bop alongside the horns.

Musicians such as Barney Kessel, Herb Ellis, Jimmy Raney and more particularly the underappreciated Tal Farlow, who emerged in the late 40s and early 50s, were instrumental in creating an approach to the jazz guitar based firmly in the Christian tradition spurred on by Reinhardt's speed of execution. It was Farlow, in vibist Red Norvo's trio alongside a young Charles Mingus on bass, who linked a sophisticated harmonic understanding to a blistering technique unprecedented among guitarists at the time. Farlow's solos were a model of poise and invention – even at tempos in excess of 216 beats per minute. And if you want to know how fast that is, then as a guide the fastest speed a metronome can be set to is 208 beats per minute! In terms of guitar prowess it was the equivalent of Roger Bannister breaking the four-minute-mile at about the same time in the early 50s. But unlike Bannister's achievement, there were few subsequent takers for such demanding tempos.

By the early 60s harmonic savvy and fast fingers were gradually absorbed into a less frantic expressionism; Kenny Burrell brought things back down to ground level with earthy, super-hip (for the time) classics like *Midnight Blue* (Blue Note) and *Guitar Forms* (Verve) – the latter arranged by Gil Evans. But his generic lines of descent were clear; they ran straight back to Christian just as surely as did those of Wes Montgomery, who emerged in 1959 with *The Wes Montgomery Trio* (OJC).

By using his thumb instead of a pick Montgomery bought a mellow tone at the expense of speed (his thumb meant downstrokes only – with a pick you can go up and down), but even so he managed a smooth, fleet, single-note style – the notes at the climax of his solos being doubled an octave higher, a technical feat much admired at the time. This trademark sound became widely imitated and indeed worked to death by

Montgomery himself on Creed Taylor's middle-of-the-road CTI albums such as *Down Here On The Ground* (A&M). However, his stock remained high amongst musicians who spoke of his awesome invention and technique, something he conspicuously avoided getting on to record, although *Smokin' At The Half Note* (Verve) with Wynton Kelly goes some way to redressing the imbalance.

FROM THE mid-50s, West Coast guitarist Jim Hall had been evolving a highly sophisticated approach that relied on subtle interaction with those around him; initially with Chico Hamilton and later with Jimmy Giuffrè. His was a style that set off those playing with him using lyrical, sapient understatement. Major improvisers such as Sonny Rollins and Paul Desmond beat a path to his door. By the time he recorded *Undercurrent* (United Artists) and *Intermodulation* (Verve) with pianist Bill Evans, he had stripped his playing of cliché and redundant phrase to become one of the unsung heroes of the jazz guitar hegemony.

Joe Pass, however, was no believer in understatement. With his 1963 debut as a leader on record, the *Catch Me* sessions (United Artists), he began to make up for almost 15 years on the fringes of skid-row. Later signed by Pablo in 1973, the subsequent *Virtuosos* (Pablo) announced that he was well on his way to becoming the greatest solo guitar recitalist in jazz, albeit with an occasionally wearying virtuosity.

In fact, the jazz guitar had evolved along a fairly claustrophobic role-model hierarchy until the late 60s, with all roads leading back to Christian; even George Benson, who when he decides to play jazz can be stunning, remains four-square in the tradition. The impact of rock and freedom in the 60s and 70s did not really break down this lineage, which continued unbroken into the 1990s. Vic Juris, Bruce Forman and the late Emily Remler, for example, were just a few who got stuck in the groove. Even John Scofield, one of the great, unanimously praised soloists to emerge from the 1980s, relies on the precedent of the likes of Jim Hall, Wes Montgomery and Joe Pass, and blues musicians like BB King, and thus back to . . . and so it goes on.

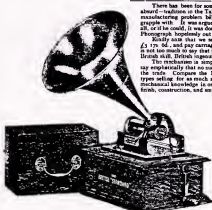
Attempts to break with historical precedent by musicians such as Sonny Sharrock, Pete Cosey, James "Blood" Ulmer and latterly the likes of Kelynn Bell and Jean-Paul Bourelly are part of another story. With a return to hard-bop during the 80s it seemed the status quo would remain invulnerable. But then an ex-Berklee student who had had lessons from Jim Hall began exploring, initially on ECM with Eberhard Weber and Jan Garbarek, the intriguing possibility of combining Hall's involuted melodic logic and crafty harmonic undertow with an abstraction of Jimi Hendrix's style. The result was that Bill Frisell became generally acknowledged as the most startlingly innovative jazz guitarist to emerge on the scene since, well, maybe Christian himself. ●

James Lincoln Collier said it in *Benny Goodman And The Swing Era* (Oxford University Press, 1989).

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- 38 (Wynon Marshall)
- 39 (Andy Sheppard)
- 40 (Ornette Coleman)
- 41 (Theonious Monk)
- 42 (Horace Silver)
- 43 (Pat Metheny)
- 46/47 (Courtney Pine)
- 48 (Joe Henderson)
- 49 (Julius Hemphill)
- 50 (David Holland)
- 51 (Marilyn Crispell)
- 52 (Sonny Rollins)
- 53 (John Scofield)
- 54 (Jason Rebello)
- 55 (David Sanborn)
- 56 (Composers)
- 57 (Bird)
- 58 (Andy Sheppard)
- 62 (Paul Reid)
- 63 (Duke Ellington)
- 65 (Bill Frisell)
- 66 (Cleveland Watkiss)
- 68 (Chet Baker)
- 69 (Willen Breaker)
- 70/71 (29th Street)
- 72 (Marcus Roberts)
- 73 (Steve Williamson)
- 75 (Roadside Picnic)
- 76 (John Sarmant)
- 77 (McCoy Tyner)
- 78 (Sun Ra)

the triumph continues

In the halcyon days of British industry, you could always rely on **John Bull** to turn out a fine quality product. These days, our overseas competitors are in much finer fettle, and some say that the great era of Blighty's industrial might is over.

As **Wire**, though, we maintain our effort to stick to the imposing standard of our forefathers. **Mr Brunel**, we like to think, would have been proud of us. And our standards have been kept high for almost 80 issues now.

Why not be British this month (overseas readers, please ignore that line) and invest in a few back issues of **Britannia's jazz and new music magazine**? They cost £2.00 each (double issues £2.70) including UK postage. Overseas: £2.40 (doubles £3.20) or £3.40 (doubles £3.90) for airmail delivery.

Send to: **Wire Back Issues, Units G&H, 115 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5PN.**

AN OLD-FASHIONED BRITISH WELCOME

I'M AFRAID I can no longer contain my anger! I wish to direct my resentment at those members of the audience who walked out during Bill Frisell's set at the Royal Festival Hall on Monday, 18 June.

Down here in deepest Southampton, we are extremely fortunate if we receive one visit a year from a major musician. Anyone of Bill Frisell's talent and calibre – easily the most innovative musician to emerge from the 80s – should receive no less than a hero's welcome. Yet, seemingly, in London any musician, no matter what his ability, can be treated with contempt.

To follow a set as superb as was Andy Sheppard's is surely a harrowing experience, not made easier by the band's brilliant Ernst Reijger. Bill Frisell's band, however, even when reduced to a trio through Hank Roberts's absence, was still a triumph.

This was easily the best concert I have attended since Jan Garbarek in Edinburgh '87, yet to my horror a large number of people left the concert during mid-performance. Not only did this serve to upset the musicians, it also marred the enjoyment for the rest of the audience, who were being treated to an outstanding performance. On reflection, I am of the opinion that these people left because they expected someone like Barney Kessel – clearly they were *Jazz Journal* fogs!

All too often individual musicians are neglected and ill-treated by the jazz public and I can only hope a musician as unique as Bill Frisell has not been permanently put off.

IAN THOMWOOD, Southampton

CD FRUSTRATION

PLEASE COULD you make a small, but significant, addition to your *Soundcheck* reviews, and insert the conventional symbols for LP, cassette and CD, thereby informing the reader the format(s) in which new releases are available.

Increasingly, more companies are limiting their releases to CD only, and some seem to



THE WRITE PLACE

Our favourite letter each month wins a bottle of delicious Jim Beam bourbon whiskey. Mum! All letters to: Write Place, Wire, Unit GGH, 115 Cleveland St, London W1P 5PN.

Score by Hobsbawn?

Today, jazz is experienced less in its live form and more through the medium of radio – why then the scanty analysis of jazz radio coverage? Do you not recognise its ability to determine tastes and trends?

SANJIV SACHDEV, Essex

I'm not sure that we can cover jazz on radio in terms of 'analysis' – most readers don't even get to hear very much, after all. But watch our new Print section for more on jazz literature – Ed.

THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

AS AN old, somewhat die-hard devotee of late 60s and early 70s British jazz, I greatly appreciate *Wire*'s recent retrospective, if at times sparse, exploration of that period.

A victim of nostalgia and a sucker for all forms of true creative effort, I would like to see less mainstream material (who needs the umpteenth McCoy Tyner interview?) and perhaps more topical features such as the one on House digital sampling. And more Biha Kopf. But going back in time, I cannot quite help considering that period as the heyday of British Jazz. How can you compare any of Andy Sheppard's records with a moving, tranquil masterpiece such as Mike Osborne's *Outback*? Or, not wanting to insult the 'young turks', any of Surman's ECM records with his albums on Deram, Dawn and Island?

A former part-time dweller of London during the 60s and 70s, I feel that the music of those years expressed the essence and appeal of the City in a way new players cannot.

To overlook the emotional and poetical value of the music then would be a heinous crime. Surely with a touch of fashionable hype it is still possible to rescue those albums from the pantheon of auction sales, reissue them and bring them back to their proper critical perspective. I still recall a time when, here in Italy at least, Tippett, Westbrook and Surman could be found in the racks alongside the latest rock imports.

SAVERIO PICHINI, Italy

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

MUCH AS I enjoy the intelligent writing and visual flair of *Wire*, I feel it has neglected some of the key features of contemporary jazz.

What is *Wire*'s opinion of the writings of Josef Skvorecky, the recent reissue of John Clellon Holmes's *The Horn* or Larkin's views on jazz. Why is it that *Wire* failed to cast its critical eye over the reissued, updated *The Jazz*

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